

# SPIRIT

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### THE WORLD IN THE OPEN AIR.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

*"I have learned  
To look on Nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth—but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of Humanity;  
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue."—WORDSWORTH.*

COME, while in freshness and dew it lies,  
To the world that is under the free blue skies !  
Leave ye man's home, and forget his care—  
There breathes no sigh on the dayspring's air.

Come to the woods, in whose mossy dells  
A light all made for the poet dwells ;  
A light, coloured softly by tender leaves,  
Whence the primrose a mellower glow receives.

The stock-dove is there in the beechen-tree,  
And the lulling tone of the honey-bee ;  
And the voice of cool waters 'midst feathery fern,  
Shedding sweet sounds from some hidden urn.

There is life, there is youth, there is tameless mirth,  
Where the streams, with the lilies they wear, have birth ;  
There is peace where the alders are whispering low :  
Come from man's dwellings, with all their woe !

Yes ! we will come—we will leave behind  
The homes and the sorrows of human kind ;  
It is well to rove where the river leads  
Its bright blue vein along sunny meads :

It is well through the rich wild woods to go,  
And to pierce the haunts of the fawn and doe ;  
And to hear the gushing of gentle springs,  
When the heart has been fretted by worldly stings :

And to watch the colours that flit and pass  
With insect-wings through the wavy grass ;  
And the silvery gleams o'er the ash-tree's bark,  
Borne in with a breeze through the foliage dark.

Joyous and far shall our wanderings be,  
As the flight of birds o'er the glittering sea ;  
To the woods, to the dingles where violets blow,  
We will bear no memory of earthly woe.

But if, by the forest-brook, we meet  
A line like the pathway of former feet ;—  
If, 'midst the hills, in some lonely spot,  
We reach the grey ruins of tower or cot ;—

If the cell where a hermit of old hath prayed  
Lift up its cross through the solemn shade ;—  
Or if some nook, where the wild flowers wave,  
Bear token sad of a mortal grave,—

Doubt not but *there* will our steps be stayed,  
There our quick spirits awhile delayed ;  
There will thought fix our impatient eyes,  
And win back our hearts to their sympathies.

For what, though the mountains and skies be fair,  
Steeped in soft hues of the summer-air,—  
'Tis the soul of man, by its hopes and dreams,  
That lights up all nature with living gleams.

Where it hath suffered and nobly striven,  
Where it hath pour'd forth its vows to Heaven ;  
Where to repose it hath brightly past,  
O'er this green earth there is glory cast.

And by that soul, amidst groves and rills,  
And flocks that feed on a thousand hills,  
Birds of the forest, and flowers of the sod,  
*We, only we,* may be linked to *God* !

#### BROAD SUMMERFORD.

**I**N the churchyard of Broad Summerford—But why should I affect to describe, as from my own recollection, a place with which I am utterly unacquainted except by report? For verily, gentle reader, I never set foot in the said churchyard—neither in the quiet rectory adjoining thereto—neither in the pretty village wherein they are situated. And yet each and all of those localities are as familiar to my mind's eye—not only as if I had seen them with the bodily organs, but as if I had long sojourned in the parish where they lie. And no wonder—for all those places were described to me at that season of life when imagination, like a cloudless mirror, reflects back every object presented before it with the faithfulness of truth, and the tablets of memory receive those *proof-impressions*, compared with which, the most perfect struck off in later years are faint and spiritless. Besides, the describer was one rich in old tales, and family legends, and all sorts of traditional lore—one whom I could interrupt and question, with all the confidence of perfect familiarity, and the impetuous curiosity of youthful eagerness—and many a firelight hour have I sat on the low footstool at her feet, list-

ening to stories of past times and departed generations, and scenes and places associated therewith, so graphically combined, that the illusion was perfect; and often, in after life, I have caught myself speaking to others of those places, persons, and circumstances, as if I had been contemporaneous with the former, and familiar with the latter, from personal observation and experience. Delightful season! delicious hours! ineffaceable recollections! never to be superseded among the heart's most precious records, by any after enjoyment, however exquisite! Far other scenes have I mingled in since then—far other interests have excited—far other feelings have engrossed me. But in weal and in woe—in cloud and in sunshine—in tumult and in silence—in crowds and in solitude—often, often have I looked back with a sickening heart, a yearning tenderness, a bitter joy, to those quiet hours, when my all of earthly good—my world of felicity—was comprised in such little space—within the walls of that old-fashioned parlour, where the fire-light flashed broad and bright on the warm damask curtains, and I sat on that low footstool by the hearth, at the feet of one who never tired of

telling those tales of other days, which I was never weary of listening to. Hers was the true graphic art of story-telling. Her portraits lived and breathed ; and while I hung upon her words with mute attention, the long procession of generations gone passed before me—not shadowy phantoms, but substantial forms—defined realities—distinguished, each from each, by every nice modification of characteristic peculiarity—uncles, aunts, and cousins, (a bewigged and brocaded host,) of whom most had been gathered before my birth to the sepulchre of their fathers, and the remaining few had lived to bestow a patriarchal blessing on their infant descendant. All these, recalled to earth by the enchanted wand, were made to re-act their former parts on the great stage for my especial pleasure ; and I became as familiar with the names, characters, and persons of those departed worthies as she who really remembered their times, and had been herself the youthful darling of their latter days.

Among those she best loved to speak of, was a kind and gentle pair—an old bachelor and his twin maiden sister, of the name of Seale, relations of my grandmother, who lived out together their long and blameless lives,

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot," in an obscure quiet village of Somersetshire, called Broad Summerford, of which parish Mr. Seale was the revered and faithful pastor for the space of more than half a century.

"They were the best people in the world," said my dear chronicler ; "and some of the happiest days of my early youth were spent at the pleasant rectory of Broad Summerford. Our good relations had heard that my parents were suffering considerable anxiety on my account, my health having become so delicate as to indicate symptoms of decline, and that change of air and scene had been medically prescribed for me. The kind souls knew that my father and mother could not remove from the small country town, where circum-

stances had fixed their residence, without very serious inconvenience, and, in the benevolence of their hearts, they forthwith dispatched an epistle, requesting that their dear cousins would intrust the precious child to their safe keeping, and to the pure air and rural change of their pastoral habitation, for as long a time as they could spare her from the paternal roof, or till her health should be perfectly re-established, which they almost pledged themselves (with God's blessing) it would be in their salubrious village. Such an invitation, from such invitors, was most gladly and gratefully accepted. My father accompanied me half-way to Broad Summerford, when he consigned me to the care of a grave, respectable-looking person, Mr. Seale's confidential servant, who was sent with his master's equipage, (a dark green calash, drawn by a steady powerful old mare, whose sleek coat and broad back might have vied with those perfections of a London dray-horse,) to receive and escort me to the rectory. John Somers himself was clad in a suit of sober pepper-and-salt, the decent and becoming livery of his reverend master, in whose service he had grown grey, and been advanced, by long-tried worth and affection, something beyond the station of a mere domestic. The kind and considerate creature did his best to beguile me of my natural grief at parting with my father for the first time in my short life of fourteen years. He pointed out to me all the most remarkable objects on our road—all the hamlets, noblemen's and gentlemen's seats ; and as he had been born and bred in the county, his topographical information was enriched with store of anecdotes respecting the owners of all those goodly mansions. But as we approached Broad Summerford, all his descriptive zeal merged in that favoured spot ; and ever and anon it was, 'Now, Miss ! you're only four miles from the rectory'—and then, 'that's Squire R.'s house, miss—a special friend of master's'—and, 'now you're

only two miles from the rectory—and there's the mill where our wheat is ground—sweet home-made bread you'll taste at Broad Summerford, miss ! and now it's only one mile—half a one—There's master's upper glebe-land—and there's our folks and horses getting in the hay—Ay, old Joan and I should hardly have been spared just now for anything but to fetch you, miss—but you're come to Broad Summerford in a pleasant time. Now we're a'top of the last hill—And there ! there ! look down to your right, miss—Don't you see that great stack of old chimneys all over ivy, and those two grey gables ?—That's the rectory, God bless it—And there's the dove-cot, and the homecroft that old Joan has all to herself—a lazy jade—and now we shall be round at the front gate in half a minute.' And as John Somers said, a short sweep brought us within that time in front of the rectory, at the fore-court gate of which stood its venerable master, in hospitable readiness to receive and welcome his expected guest. He was indeed a man of most venerable aspect,—of tall and large stature, but something bowed by years, with a pale, placid, almost unwrinkled countenance, though the dim and faded lustre of his mild blue eyes betokened his advanced age, even more than the perfectly white hair, which, encircling his bald crown, descended even to his shoulders in still redundant waves of silky softness. The old man was standing, with both hands crossed before him on the top of a thick knotted staff, and the attitude happily combining with his orthodox attire, the short cassock and apron became him with a sort of apostolic dignity. As the calash drew up to the gate, Mr. Seale laid aside his staff, and coming forward, welcomed me with a look and voice of almost paternal kindness, and though faithful John was already by the side of the vehicle to help me down, his master chose to perform that first hospitable office, and lifting me out in his feeble arms, (I was a small delicate girl—

quite a child in appearance,) said, 'Welcome to Broad Summerford, my dear little cousin. May God bless this meeting to us all !' And with that affectionate and pious greeting, he half led, half carried me to the house door, where, on the uppermost of the four broad steps which led to it, stood another aged welcomer, who tenderly reiterated her brother's Christian salutation, and sealed it with a maternal kiss, as she gently drew me to her kind bosom. And so in a moment the little wanderer was at home again—transported but from one home to another—from the arms of tender parents to those which encircled her almost as fondly.

"Mrs. Helen Seale was the very personification of beautiful old age. A fairy creature she was—almost diminutive of stature—but her person in youth had been most delicately and symmetrically moulded ; and in her old age it still retained much of its fair proportion, and all its native gracefulness. Her hands and arms were still beautiful ! The taper fingers and soft palms were yet tinged with that delicate pink, which still mantled like a maiden blush over a face where Time had set his seal indeed, but, as it should seem, reluctantly, as if the ruthless spoiler had half relented for once in his destructive work. Her eyes were blue like her brother's, (the brother and sister were indeed twins in mind and feature,) but their mild lustre was almost unimpaired ; and the soft hair that was combed in glossy smoothness over the roll, under her clear lawn cap, was but silvered here and there among its pale brown waviness. No snow was ever whiter,—no cobweb was ever finer, than that same clear lawn of which Mrs. Helen's cap, kerchief, ruffles, and apron, were invariably composed ; and the latter was spread out in unruffled purity over a richly-quilted petticoat of silver-grey silk, and a gown of the same material, abounding in such depth and amplitude of fold as would have furnished out a dozen modern draperies. A narrow black velvet

collar encircled her small fair throat, (down which, as is related of fair Rosamond, I used to think one might see the red wine flow,) and the precise neck-kerchief was fastened with a fine diamond pin. The fashion of this raiment was never varied by season or circumstance, except that, regularly on the thirty-first of October, the rich lustering was exchanged for a richer satin of the same colour; a black lace handkerchief was super-added to that of snowy lawn, and a pair of black velvet mittens, turned down with white satin, were drawn over the delicate hands and arms, not to be discarded till the thirty-first of May drew forth the silvery lustering from its retirement of lavender and roses, and consigned the warm satin to a five month's seclusion.

"It was marvellous to observe how Mrs. Helen kept herself *in point* as she did! From morning to night, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, always the same,—always "mise à quatres épingle," as if she had just stept out of a band-box; the silk or satin unchanging in hue or freshness—its lawn accompaniments never contracting soil or wrinkle on their snowy smoothness—the neck-kerchief folded in exactly the same number of plaits by the careful hand of that ancient Abigail Mrs. Betty, who would probably have been as much *déroutée* by any innovation of those laws of the Medes and Persians, as if her venerable mistress had commanded a ball-dress or a wedding-suit. Yes; one would have thought that the dear old lady had been kept in a band-box, all ready for company, if her whole course of life had not, in fact, been one of most active, though quiet usefulness; for Mrs. Helen was never in a bustle. Neither was she uncomfortably precise about the preservation of this invariable neatness. Nay,—I have seen the old grey parrot on her wrist or her shoulder, and the favourite tortoise-shell cat on her lap often and often; and the old lady took snuff too, and, spite of all, the unruffled purity of at-

tire remained inviolate. The matter was a mystery to me, whose whole girlish life had hitherto been an outrage to the oracles of tidiness.—But I must tell you something more of my first evening at Summerford Rectory. It was already evening, you remember, when I arrived there,—about seven o'clock of a sweet June evening, when the old green calash drove up to the entrance court, and my venerable cousin listed me down within its quiet precincts. The entrance gate was of filigree iron work, breast high, between two low stone pillars, crowned with balls, but the walls were all evergreen—beautiful holly hedges, as finely kept as ever those at Sayes Court could have been in their day of perfection. This living wall, opening to the right and left in two bowery arch-ways, leading to the offices and garden, formed three sides of the square court, and the old mansion itself completing the fourth boundary—a very antique dwelling, with quarter work of red brick, mellowed by time and weather to the richest and most harmonious colouring. The double gable (the same John Somers had pointed out to me from the hill top) was surmounted on each pinnacle by stone balls similar to those on the entrance pillars. One was quite wound and matted over with ivy, of which only a few encroaching tendrils had as yet curled round the other ball; but lower down a fine apricot covered a considerable portion of the wall with its skilfully trained branches, and a lovely honeysuckle (then in full bloom) had been allowed to occupy the remaining space, and almost to darken some of the windows with its picturesque festoons. The latticed windows were set deep in heavy stone framework, and the massy doorway opened from a flight of four broad steps, on the uppermost of which, on either side, stood two tubs containing fine orange-trees. And there, as I told you, in the doorway between those two fragrant supporters, stood the dear old lady; and after I had

received the welcome of her gentle embrace, the brother and sister, taking each a hand, led me between them, through an airy entrance hall, into a small but lofty anti-room, hung round with family portraits, and from thence into a large pleasant parlour, the common sitting room. A very pleasant cheerful room it was, with a fine wide bay window opposite the entrance, and on one side a sashed door, then standing open to a broad gravel walk, bordered on either side by beds of the choicest and sweetest flowers. The apartment contained no costly furniture, except a fine Indian folding skreen of many leaves, and a valuable Japan cabinet, loaded with rare old china. The curtains were composed of white dimity, as well as the *short petticoats* of the settee and chairs. Those odd little chairs! Methinks I see them now, with their oval backs, sloping down like falling shoulders into little fin-like arms, spread out with such an air of tender invitation! And they held out no false promise. Modern luxury, *recherchée* as it is, has nothing half so comfortable among all its traps for loungers. I was soon placed in one of those delightful fauteuils by the side of my kind hostess, who established herself before the tea equipage, all ready set out on a small Pembroke table near the beautiful bay window. My travelling guardian, John Somers, (jealous of devolving upon others any of his accustomed services,) soon appeared with the silver-chased tea-kettle and lamp, which he set down on a small mahogany tripod, beside his venerable lady, and it was pleasant to observe the almost reverential gratitude with which the faithful servant replied to the kind greeting of his aged mistress, and her thanks 'for having brought their dear young cousin safe to Summerford Rectory.' The usual tea hour was long past on the evening of my arrival, but for once the clock-work regularity of established custom was infringed, in kind consideration for the expected guest, and Mrs. Helen, anticipating that

'the poor child would be half famished,' had taken care that the tea-table should be far more abundantly provided than with the four slices of wafer bread and butter, its customary allotment. In truth, the dear old lady had calculated with great foresight, for I did such ample justice to her plain seed-cake, and made such consumption of her sweet home-made bread and butter, as must have infinitely relieved any apprehension she might have conceived at the first sight of the poor little sickly creature of whom she had so benevolently taken charge. But, in fact, it must have been that the air of Broad Summerford wrought miracles. At home, for many preceding weeks, I had almost loathed the sight of food.

"Mr. Seale and Mrs. Helen soon drew me into familiar conversation; and, by the time tea was over, I was prattling away to them with as much unrestraint as if I had been domesticated under their roof for a twelve-month. But even before the tea equipage was removed, this excitement of animal spirits began to sink under bodily languor and extreme fatigue; my eyelids fell involuntarily, and the sentence I was uttering died away in an inarticulate manner as my head dropt aside against Mrs. Helen's shoulder. Half roused, however, by the gentle contact, I was just sensible that a kind arm encircled me, and a tender kiss was imprinted on my forehead,—that something was said about ringing for Betty, for that 'the poor dear child could not sit up to prayers;' and then the bell was pulled,—(with what extraordinary acuteness the sound of a bell tingles in one's ears in that state of half slumber!)—and Mrs. Betty summoned, and between her and her mistress I was somehow, with little exertion of my own, conducted up stairs into a bedchamber, undressed, and put to bed in a state of the most passive helplessness,—unconsciousness wellnigh, except that I was still exquisitely sensible of the luxury of sinking down on the soft pillow between the smooth fine

sheets, that smelt deliciously of lavender and roses.

" I recollect nothing more till the next morning, (my eleven hours' nap had been a dreamless spell,) when I unclosed my eyes to the light of a bright summer sun, which streamed in between the white curtains of my bed, and to the emulative brightness and summer sunshine of Mrs. Betty's comely countenance, who, having looked over and arranged my wardrobe, and prepared everything for my levee, stood waiting in patient silence the natural termination of my unconscionable slumber, from which her gentle mistress, who had already looked in on me from her adjoining dressing-room, had prohibited all attempt to awaken me. ' Let the poor dear have her sleep out,' said the kind lady, and there stood Mrs. Betty a statue of silent obedience. At last, however, when it pleased me to awaken, that portly handmaid saluted with a pleasant good-morrow, and the information, that if I pleased to rise and dress directly, I should still be in time for prayers, and ' Master and Mistress's breakfast.' So, between my own alacrity and her assistance, I was soon ready, and then she showed me down to that large pleasant sitting-room, from which, indeed, I had ascended the preceding evening, but in such a slumberous state, as to leave me no recollection of the way. Breakfast was ready laid, and Mrs. Helen had just preceded me into the room, where sat her venerable brother, at the head of the breakfast table, with the Bible open before him, in which he was marking out the morning chapters.

" Both my kind cousins greeted me with cordial affection, and Mr. Seale, calling me towards him, while his sister rang the summons to their little household, said, ' Come, and take your place by me, my dear child—I think, after to-day, I shall appoint you my clerk, for I know your good father has well qualified you for the office.' Proud and happy girl was I to take my station beside that good old man, and on the mor-

row to assume my allotted office; and though my voice faltered a little at the first responses, my father had made me a correct and articulate reader, and from that day forth I officiated to the entire satisfaction of my indulgent hearers, and with a very tolerable proportion of self-approval.

" Soon after breakfast, Mrs. Helen took me with her through all the household departments, in every one of which, good order and beautiful neatness shone apparent. Five servants composed the in-door establishment—Mr. John and Mrs. Betty having authority over the Corps de Cuisine, under the mild control of the higher powers, for Mrs. Helen, though reposing perfect confidence in her old and faithful servants, took an active share in the family arrangements, and no little pride indeed, in all the more refined and complex culinary arts—such as pickling—preserving—making wines and cordials—sweet waters, and strong-waters—pastry, and floating islands—and confectionary hedgehogs. In all the mysteries of distilling the dear old lady was an adept. Rose, peach, almond, and orange flower—pennyroyal and peppermint waters, were ranged rank and file in long-necked squat bottles on the still-room shelves, sufficient in quantity to flavour all the confectionary, and cure all the stomach aches, in England. I believe, indeed, Mrs. Helen did supply half the county, so great was the reputation of her odoriferous stores, and so liberal her distribution of them. Certain it is, that the annual replenishment of the stock, was considered as much a matter of course by the lady and her assistant handmaid, as the summer reproduction of the grey lustring and its accompaniments;—but why, or on what principle Mrs. Helen conceived it equally indispensable to concoct a certain yearly quantity of Plague-water, I was never fully satisfied, nor, indeed, did it ever come within my knowledge, that there were any applicants for that invaluable elixir, made after the recipe of 'our

late Queen Henrietta Maria of blessed memory,' as set forth in crabbed tawny characters, in the old family receipt book ; neither could I ever precisely ascertain (though I had my own surmises on the subject,) what became of the quantity which periodically disappeared from the shelf, to be replaced by a fresh concoction.

" It were endless to enumerate the palsy-waters—balsams—tinctures—elixirs—electuaries, which occupied one department of the still-room, and almost profane to reveal the mysteries of that sacred chamber, during the season of concoctions—mysteries as jealously guarded as those of the Bona Dea from the eyes of the uninitiated and ignorant.

" In after days of complete naturalization in the family, I was privileged with *les grandes et petites entrées* even of that generally prohibited closet—and great was my delight in accompanying thither my venerable cousin, when her occupation lay within the spicery or confectionary region, and in receiving her instructions in the arts she excelled in—those always excepted which related to the medicinal department ; for to my shame be it spoken, I derived infinitely more gratification from the pastime of sticking over blancmange hedgehogs with almond bristles, than in compounding the most infallible ointment, nor could I (with all deference to Mrs. Helen's superior wisdom) ever go the length of agreeing, that her tincture of rhubarb was to the full as palatable as her fine old raisin wine, and her walnuts preserved with sugar and senna equally delicious with those guiltless of the latter ingredient.

" Among the various concerns transacted in that notable chamber, one of the most important, that of breaking up the loaves of double refined sugar, was always superintended by Mrs. Helen ; and on those occasions, with a fine cambric handkerchief pinned on over her clear lawn apron, she assumed even an active share in the operation, and I used to delight in watching the lady-

like manner with which the clumsy nippers were managed by her pretty little pink fingers, and the quiet dexterity which supplied their deficiency of muscular strength. If Mrs. Helen Seale had chosen by way of variety, to twirl a mop, or handle a carpet-broom, she must have done it with the air and grace of a perfect gentlewoman.

" But you are impatient to know more of my first day at Summerford Rectory. It was full of delightful incident to me, though little or nothing to make a story out of. I have told you how Mrs. Helen took me her morning round through the still-room, the housekeeper's room, and various offices ; and then we visited the dairy—Such a dairy ! such a paradise of milk, and cream, and butter, and curds, and whey, and cream cheeses, and crystal water, and purity and fragrance ! for many bouquets of the sweetest flowers were dispersed among the glossy milk pans, and round the shallow reservoir of a marble slab in the centre of the octagon building ; on the polished surface of which, butter pots of many a fantastic shape were curiously arranged, half floated by a constant supply of the purest and coldest water, conveyed thither from a neighbouring spring. From the dairy we passed into the poultry-yard, and there I was introduced to a train of milk-white turkeys, and fowls of the same colour—a few bantams, and three galanies—Mrs. Helen's especial favourites, though the perverse creatures could never be brought to submit to any of the regulations of the feathered establishment, straying away over pales, walls, roofs, and barriers of every description, scratching up seedbeds, and flower-borders, to the despair of the gardener, and laying their eggs on those, or on the bare gravel walk, in flagrant dereliction of all fitness and propriety. Yet those irreclaimables were, as I told you, prime favourites with their order-loving mistress ; and I, who partook in some measure of their wild, and wandering, and untameable nature,

very shortly became the object of her tender and unbounded indulgence, though the dear lady's nice sense of decorum, and habitual placidity, were frequently startled into a gesture of amazement and a hasty exclamation at sight of her élève swinging on the orchard gate—scrambling like a cat along the top of the garden wall—running knee-deep in mud, with a lap full of cresses from the water meadow, or with a frock torn to tatters, in some lawless excursion over hedges and hurdles, when, as dear Mrs. Helen mildly assured me, ‘the common roadway was so much shorter and pleasanter.’ It was some time, indeed, before I astounded the decorous inhabitants of the Rectory, with these feats of prowess. On my first arrival, I was far too weak and languid for such performances, even if I had not been restrained a while by natural shyness, but that soon yielded to the affectionate encouragement of my kind hosts; and in a month’s time, the

pure air of Broad Summerford—gentle exercise in the old calash, in which Mr. Seale took me a daily airing—simple but nourishing diet, and asses’ milk, had so effectually restored my health, that my natural exuberance of animal spirits began to manifest itself by the indications aforesaid, somewhat to the consternation of Mrs. Helen, though she could not find in her heart to repress ‘the fine spirits of the poor dear child, so wonderfully recovered (under God’s blessing) by Summerford air, and her good management.’ ”

So much for one “night’s entertainment,” as I have faithfully recorded it, from the well-remembered words of my dear historian. She shall resume the narrative in an ensuing chapter, for the benefit of all those who have patience with a subject, which has neither invention—magic—adventure—sentiment—eccentricity—passion—love—murder, or metaphysics to recommend it—only TRUTH.

#### VICISSITUDES IN THE LIFE OF AN ACTOR.—NO. II.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

“ ‘Tis true, ‘tis pity—and pity ‘tis ‘tis true.”

(See page 380.)

**I**T was late next day before I awoke from the profound sleep which had closed the events of a night so replete with vexation and distress. I could not for some time collect my scattered thoughts sufficiently to comprehend my situation. At first I felt an agreeable sensation, like that produced by the receipt of some welcome intelligence. Fleeting, however, as “the morning vapour,” was this momentary gleam of felicity; only serving to deepen, by contrast, the succeeding gloom. My mind now slowly awakened to the contemplation of the unpleasing images which memory presented; and I was aroused to a recollection of my circumstances by an acute sense of pain in one of my knees, arising from a violent inflammation,

the consequence of exposure to damp and cold, during my miserable walk the preceding night. The remarkable situation in which I was placed made me speculate on the most trivial occurrence, and weigh with attention every passing thought; I have a perfect recollection of the several changes of which my mind was that morning conscious.

My first consideration was, how to extricate myself from the dilemma in which I was involved. I could think of no feasible expedient, but that of applying to one of my former acquaintances, stating my circumstances, and requesting assistance. It occurred to me, that, about that time of the year, a young friend with whom I had passed many convivial hours, was likely to be in London,

pursuing his studies at the Temple ; and to him I resolved to apply. I arose, dressed, and with difficulty hobbled down-stairs, for my knee was much swollen, and the pain great. From my landlord I borrowed a stout walking-stick, and with its help contrived to limp to Brunswick-square, where my friend resided. I found him at home, stated my case, and obtained the loan of a guinea. Having discharged my bill at the hotel, I sallied forth in search of some humbler lodging. I called at the house near Lecester-square, where I had formerly sojourned ; and finding a bed-room disengaged, I hired it for eight shillings a week. With the money which remained, I laid in a stock (not a very large one) of tea and sugar, bread and butter, coals and candles ; and having thus provided for present wants, I sat down with tolerable composure to speculate on my prospects for the future. They were not, indeed, very bright ; and it would have puzzled any but an enthusiast like myself to discover in the view a single gleam of sunshine. With me, however, hope ever dwelt ; my waking dreams were not yet at an end ; the lesson I had so lately received, and the repentance which it awakened, vanished with the misery which had caused them ; and I was even so accommodating as to draw consolation from my very distresses, by reflecting that most great actors had also suffered, previously to attaining eminence ; and that perhaps my present sufferings were but the prelude to future prosperity. There is, in some romantic minds, a charm in misery itself, which enables them to bear up against adversity. It was even pleasing to anticipate the feelings with which I should hereafter recount to admiring friends "the dangers I had passed," when I had reached my anticipated prosperity.

In the midst of these pleasing cogitations, I was not insensible to bodily pain, and that which I suffered from my knee interrupted sadly my delightful reveries. The walk during

the day had increased the inflammation, and it became necessary to apply some remedy. I consulted with my landlady, and, by her advice, had recourse to fomentations of camomile flowers and hot water, which reduced the swelling and pain. Owing to this remedy, I had a tolerable night's rest ; but more than a week elapsed before I could walk, and by that time my stock of money was exhausted, and I was again penniless. I could not then, as on former occasions, procure relief from the pawnbroker, because though he "freely lent to all the poor," it was upon condition that they "left a pledge behind ;" and my worldly goods, save those which decency could not dispense with, were safely stowed in my bed-room at the inhospitable tavern from which I had been expelled, and could not be obtained without payment of my bill. I could as easily have paid the national debt. While debating with myself upon this important question, I was surprised by a visit from a worthy fellow, named S——, with whom I had some months before formed an acquaintance. His station in life was humble, and his means narrow, for he filled a very subordinate situation in the *corps dramatique* of Covent-garden Theatre, but his heart was in the right place. He discovered that all was not well with me, and extracted a confession of my circumstances. From that moment, to his honour be it told, for no other reason but because I was poor, he became devotedly my friend ; and to his unremitting kindness during several weeks, I was indebted for the means of existence.

To such a deplorable state was I reduced at this time, that one scanty, coarse meal in twenty-four hours was a luxury, and I considered myself fortunate when I could raise the means of procuring even that. Frequently, when the shadows of evening concealed my misery, I have wandered through the streets of the great metropolis, hungry and penniless, starving in the midst of plenty. Sometimes I have paused to feast my

imagination upon the vision of plenty which met my enraptured view through the kitchen windows of the wealthy ; and as I watched the kitchen-maid basting the half-roasted meat, I envied her the slight intimacy which she enjoyed with the tempting joint ! What would I not, at such moments, have given to be a greasy kitchen-wench ! Turning from such sights in bitterness of anguish, I have proceeded along, "unknowing what I sought," until, arrested in my aimless progress by the savoury exhalations of some well-frequented coffee-house, I have stopped to revel in the fascinating odours. With my eyes fixed upon the door, enviously watching the happy mortals who with sharp appetites and well-stocked purses confidently entered to partake of the good cheer, samples of which were maliciously, as it seemed to me, placed in the window ; I have stood near the entrance of one of these houses, until my fancy pictured to me the ghosts of the departed materials of gravy, giblet, mock turtle, and other soups, grinning at me through the area bars a ghastly defiance ; while in the distance the shadows of sheep and oxen seemed laughing at my vain pretensions. Dispirited and weary, I would then return to my lonely lodging to finish the crust which prudence had spared from the scanty breakfast of the morning !

At length, so completely was my spirit depressed, that I became incapable of exertion ; and my means being exhausted, my only defence against hunger was to lie in bed all day. From this state I was daily aroused by S——, who made me a regular call about three or four o'clock ; and when he discovered the cause of my remaining in bed, he would invent some excuse to take me out, and in the course of our walk lead me into a coffee-house, as if by accident, and compel me (nothing loth I must confess) to take refreshment. He would often insist upon lending me some silver to provide a breakfast for the morrow, and I have

known him borrow from others for this purpose. In the mean time he was active in his endeavours to procure me a situation ; and having learned that there was a vacancy in the Norwich company, of a nature likely to suit me, he advised me to write to the manager, offering my services. I did so ; and after some negotiation, was engaged for the line of business called the "walking gentleman," at a salary of thirty shillings per week. This was indeed joy to me, but I had yet great obstacles to overcome, for I could not make the journey without money, and it would be idle for me to go without clothes, and various stage properties, which were, as I have stated, under detainer. I was required to join the company at Norwich in about a fortnight, and that was but a short time to raise so considerable a sum as was necessary for the occasion. Less than five pounds would not be sufficient, but where it was to come from, or how it was to be raised, I had not the least conception.

One evening, while I was in this joyous uncertain state, S—— gave me an admission to Covent-garden Theatre, and I went to beguile the time, without inquiring or caring what was to be the performance. On entering the theatre, I found the play was "Richard the Third," and that an actor from the country was to make his first bow to a London audience, in the part of the crook-backed tyrant.

To theatrical people a first appearance is always interesting, and I therefore could not feel wholly unconcerned on the foregoing occasion ; but a more than ordinary degree of interest was awakened, when I recognised in the new candidate for fame, my friend G—— B——, who was one of the actors at Birmingham when I made my brilliant attempt there, and with whom I then formed an acquaintance which had subsequently ripened into friendship. I anxiously watched his progress through the arduous task he had un-

dertaken, joined heartily in the applause with which his efforts were rewarded; and, when the performance was over, waited for him at the stage door, to intercept him in his passage out, and offer him my congratulations. He was glad to see me, took me home to sup with him, and having learned from me the difficulty by which I was embarrassed, he generously offered me the assistance of his purse. By this fortunate circumstance all impediments to my journey were at once obviated, and hope again smiled upon me.

The result of my friend B——'s daring experiment in *Richard* was a good engagement at Covent-garden. His professional abilities have ever since enabled him to command a highly respectable station on the metropolitan boards. Encouraged by his success I resolved to persevere, and had little doubt that I should, ere long, become an eminent actor, and be rewarded for all my sufferings by a profitable engagement in London.

The remnant of my wardrobe being released from "durance vile," the preparations for my journey were soon completed, and, having taken leave of my worthy friends, I mounted the coach, and set out for Norwich with a sanguine heart and a light purse: so light, indeed, that when I reached my destination, my capital amounted only to five shillings. With this sum I might have managed to get through a night or two, had I been acquainted with the town; but I was an utter stranger there, and it was late in the evening when I arrived. I had therefore no choice, and was obliged to put up at the inn at which the coach stopped. I had scarcely formed this conclusion, when the sight of a handsome stone staircase leading from the street to a gaily lighted hall, impressing the beholder with an idea of splendour and high charges within, so filled me with terror, and made my five shillings feel so contemptible in my pocket that I stood for some time hesitating upon the threshold,

and would have gone in quest of a cheaper-looking house, had I not found that my luggage could not be moved without payment of seven shillings, which the clerk in the coach-office thought proper to charge for its carriage from London. This was a difficulty not to be surmounted; so, yielding to circumstances, I assumed an air of boldness, ordered my luggage to be sent into the house, and in a patronising tone of voice desired the waiter to pay for it. This being done, I was soon seated before a good fire in the small parlour of the Bowling-green Inn. Being in the house, and feeling that I might as well be "hanged for a sheep as a lamb," I did not scruple to eat a hearty supper, which my long ride had made necessary.

The next morning, when I had breakfasted, and was preparing to present myself to the manager, I heard a strange stamping noise along the passage which led to the parlour, and presently a rough knock at the door. Who can this be? thought I: perhaps the waiter, to demand repayment of the sum he had paid for my luggage. But then the stamping noise—what could that mean? Could he have thought it necessary to arm himself with a heavy stick, or had he, suspecting the state of my purse, called in the aid of a constable? I was dreadfully alarmed, I scarcely knew why; but conscience was very busy in suggesting the probability of some fatal exposure and consequent disgrace. However, I mustered courage to say, "Come in!" The door opened, and a short stout man with rough visage, in which humour and goodnature were strongly depicted, stood before me. I looked anxiously for the huge stick, or staff of office, with which I expected to see him armed; but he had no such weapon, and I beheld, to my great relief, the innocent cause of my terror—a wooden leg, which, being one of the supporters of a heavy body, had made the alarming noise. "Your servant, Sir," said my visitor. "Good morning, Sir," said I, wondering to

myself what such a strange-looking fellow could want with me. "I understand," continued he, "that you are come down to perform in our theatre: now, as I have a friendship for the stage, and know the profession too well to suppose that you are overburdened with money, I am come to beg that you will not be uneasy about your expenses here; for I am the landlord, and I will take care that you shall not be put to inconvenience. You must not be offended with me, for I mean well." "Offended! my dear Sir," cried I, joyfully, "I am delighted beyond expression, for I was just now puzzling my brain how to pay my bill; and, to say the truth, the funds are very low." "Well, never mind that," replied he; "will you dine with me to-day?" I very readily accepted his invitation, and after some farther conversation, my worthy host, whose name was Gurney, took his leave, and I walked forth in search of the theatre. Having announced myself to the manager, I met with a polite and friendly reception, and was introduced by him to the "ladies and gentlemen" in the green-room. He then questioned me as to the parts which I had studied, and asked if I had ever played Rasleigh Osbaldistone, "in Rob Roy," which piece was to be done the next evening. I replied, that I had not played the part; but that I was willing to undertake it, if he thought proper. It was therefore settled, that, next evening, and in Rasleigh, I should make my first appearance on the Norwich boards. Had I known anything of the profession, I would certainly not have chosen so unfavourable and up-hill a part for a first appearance, and particularly on such short notice; but I was too sanguine to be wise. Having provided myself with a book of the play, I returned to the Bowling-green, shut myself up in a private room, and studied with diligence until dinner-time. At dinner I was introduced to the landlady, a very charming woman, whose hospitable manners gave an additional relish to

an excellent repast; and having done ample justice to the good fare set before me, and helped my host to dispose of a bottle of prime wine, I felt as happy as a prince. Mindful, however, of business, I retired in good time to my room, where I renewed my study, and laboured incessantly till I had made myself master of Rasleigh Osbaldistone.

On the following morning my landlord informed me, that as he and his wife had taken a liking to me, I might, if I was willing, remain in the house to board and lodge with them, and pay whatever I thought proper. Such an arrangement possessed too many advantages to be rejected, and I very readily consented to remain. As evening, and with it the hour of my trial, approached, I felt myself becoming exceedingly nervous; but a few glasses of my host's good wine inspired me with courage, and I got through my task without encountering any decided marks of disapprobation from the audience. I had not, indeed, the pleasure of receiving any applause, and once or twice I thought I heard an ill-suppressed titter run through the house during my most serious scenes; but I was not to be intimidated by trifles, and, altogether, I was very well satisfied with the issue. I cannot, however, say as much of my next attempt, which was in the part of Count Virolet, in "The Mountaineers." Until the last scene, I thought all was going on well; but unfortunately at that particular crisis of the play, when the arm of Octavian (uplifted to slay Bulcazim Muley) should be arrested by Virolet, I had placed myself at such a distance up the stage, that it was impossible for me (when the cue was given) to reach the front time enough to save the poor Moor's life, had Octavian been serious in his menace in killing him. In consequence of this mismanagement, Bulcazim lay prostrate at the feet of his enemy much longer than was consistent with his safety, and Octavian was compelled to exhibit a degree of forbearance quite out of keeping with his impetuous character.

After detaining the parties some time in this awkward predicament, I reached the front, covered with confusion, and just time enough to encounter a storm of hissing, which, however, the ludicrous attitude I assumed immediately changed for hearty laughter. It was now my fate to receive the arrear of disapprobation, which courtesy had withheld the audience from manifesting on my first appearance; and, to my infinite grief the curtain fell amidst a mingled torrent of groans, hissing, and laughter, poured forth on my devoted head. It is scarcely necessary to say that I was not speedily called upon to exhibit again. In a few days I received a polite note from Mr. Smith, informing me, that, not conceiving my professional experience sufficient to qualify me for the line of business I had undertaken, he must be under the disagreeable necessity of parting from me at the expiration of two months, the time in such case agreed upon. Here was a cruel reverse of fortune. However, I had two months of my engagement yet to enjoy, and I did not despair of convincing the manager of my talent, and of averting the execution of his hard decree.

At the end of the first week, when I had received my salary, I handed my hostess twenty shillings, and conceiving that her demand against me for a week's board and lodging, such as she provided me, must exceed that sum, I requested that she would allow me to remain in her debt for the residue until the following Saturday; but, to my surprise, she gave me five shillings change, telling me that she intended to charge me fifteen shillings per week, if I did not think it too much. I protested against the charge as inadequate, but she persisted in her determination of not accepting more, and I was obliged to acquiesce. On these terms it was agreed that I should continue an inmate of the family during my stay in Norwich. Thus was I, by the most unlooked-for occurrences, placed in the midst of plenty, surround-

ed by comforts which my income under ordinary circumstances could not have commanded, and furnished with the constant opportunity of enjoying respectable society without stirring abroad; for the Bowling-green is one of the best inns in Norwich, and is frequented by most of the wealthy farmers in the neighbourhood, as well as by the professional persons and substantial tradesmen of the town, many of whom meet there every evening in a large room appointed for the purpose, to read the papers, talk over the news, smoke, and take a friendly glass.

Naturally light-hearted, of a social disposition and of spirits too elastic to be long depressed, I again forgot past affliction, and lost sight of future terror in present enjoyment; and I had the satisfaction of acquiring with a rapidity, which has since astonished me, the acquaintance of all, and the friendship of many of the visitors to the Bowling-green. But all this, though exceedingly pleasant at the time, was attended with very ill consequences to me in the result. The kindness of my worthy host and his wife seemed daily to increase, and their conduct towards me was in fact that of affectionate and anxious parents. They perceived, as did all who knew me, that I was superior to the situation in which they saw me; and they pitied, when it would have been more just to condemn me. Amongst those who were but slightly acquainted with me, or who knew me only as a public performer, various accounts of my private history, all equally unfounded, were in circulation, and I had frequently the pleasure of hearing very amusing or very romantic anecdotes of myself which had no foundation in truth.

My friend Gurney frequently and earnestly advised me to quit the vain pursuit in which I had engaged, and offered to assist me in establishing myself in some more eligible way of life; but the infatuation was yet too strong, and his friendly remonstrances were lost upon me. Such obstinacy, now, appears to me the

more surprising, when I consider the mean rank which I held in the theatre ; for, after my unfortunate second appearance, I was never entrusted with a part of more than eight or ten lines, and even in those it was generally my lot to be hissed. The unfavourable reception which I constantly met, had the effect of increasing my *mauvaise honte* to such a degree, that I became absolutely ludicrous whenever I appeared before the audience ; for the moment I set my foot on the stage my heart seemed to leap into my mouth, my breathing thickened, my knees knocked each other as if gifted with perpetual motion, and huge drops of perspiration starting from my forehead, "chased each other down my innocent nose." My voice, too, entered into the general combination against me ; and whenever I attempted to speak on such occasions, it was sure to divide itself into two distinct and separate tones, like those of Mr. Doublelungs, to the very great delight of the ill-natured portion of my audience, who used to take such opportunities of favouring me with a round of mock applause. My face and figure were but little calculated to make such an impression as might stem the tide of wrath or ridicule ; for hollow cheeks, large nose, and small grey eyes, set so deeply in the head as to be scarcely visible at a few yards' distance, are not likely to excite admiration. Nor was respect to be inspired by narrow shoulders, long dangling arms, large feet and legs, which, to use the description often applied to them, resembled Number 11 on a hall-door badly painted. In addition to these mirth-exciting endowments, I was afflicted with such superlative awkwardness, that to attempt the simplest act was to blunder in it ; and when I took a sword or other weapon in my hand, I seldom escaped doing some mischief to myself or those about me. One night, in drawing my sword hastily, I raised it so high above my head, and with such unnecessary violence, that I broke in pieces a hand-

some glass chandelier which hung over the side-door, and dashed the fragments into the faces of the people in the pit and stage-box. Having in some play to seize one of the principal actors, I did so with such vehemence, that taking him by surprise, I threw him off his legs, fell with him on the stage, and blackened his eye with the hilt of my sword. Accidents of the same kind were so frequent in their occurrence with me, that they soon ceased to be wondered at, and I became the object of continued mirth as well behind as before the curtain. Such was I on the stage ; and yet it is nevertheless true, that in private life I was always considered a young man of prepossessing appearance, good address, and easy carriage. So different are the situations, so wholly distinct the requisite qualifications, that he who shines most in the drawing-room is often the least calculated to adorn the stage ; and the elegant gentleman in the one is most likely to be the awkward clown on the other. That the profession of an actor does not disqualify him for the most polished society, we have many living proofs ; but that the graceful private gentleman must of course be a graceful public performer, is a most erroneous idea, which, as its tendency is mischievous, cannot be too strongly deprecated. Most men think themselves capable of acting as cleverly as the performers whom they nightly see in the theatres ; but such notions are generally founded in ignorance of the subject. I have heard many men say, that when all other trades fail a man may become an actor ; and I was once of opinion, like them, that nothing could be more easy ; but experience and observation have taught me the contrary. The stage is a profession which requires a long and laborious apprenticeship, as well as an extraordinary combination of mental, personal, and physical endowments. With a deformed person, a man may rise to eminence at the bar ; with a weak voice and an inflexible face he may make his for-

tune as a physician; and with all these defects, and even without the aid of mind, he may be a Bishop in the church, or a General in the army; but any one of these imperfections will prevent his being an actor. To a few the stage is the road to fortune and fame; but to the many it is a thorny path to penury and contempt. He who supposes it to be a life of idleness or pleasure is much mistaken; it is full of labour, anxiety, and mortification. Fortunate is the man who attains to eminence in the profession; but thrice happy is he, who, wanting the qualifications, escapes the baneful contagion of the theatrical mania; or being infected, has the good sense to perceive his danger, and to apply the wholesome medicine of reason to his disordered mind.

When I had been about six or seven weeks in the Norwich company, and had almost completed the period of my engagement; when I had no other prospect but that of being soon again turned adrift upon the world in poverty and sorrow, it happened that Mr. Wilkins, the patentee and proprietor of the theatre, paid a visit to Norwich, and put up at the Bowling-green Inn. Ever active in the cause of benevolence, my worthy friend Gurney lost not a moment in availing himself of this opportunity to serve me; and so successfully did he plead in my behalf, that I received a message from Mr. Wilkins, desiring the pleasure of my company to take a glass of wine with him on the evening of the day after his arrival. This was an honour to which I had not the slightest pretension; for I could not have presumed to think that a man like Mr. Wilkins, moving in an exalted sphere, filling a station in the university of Cambridge, and distinguished alike by his learning, talents, and fortune, would condescend to notice so humble a being as myself, whose only claim to commiseration arose from misfortunes brought on by my own folly. But I did gross injustice to Mr. Wilkins, by supposing his heart insensible to

the miseries of his fellow-creatures. He received me with the freedom of an equal and the warmth of a friend, and, after a long conversation, promised to exert his influence to have me retained in the theatre. At the same time he informed me, that the trust reposed in Mr. Smith had uniformly been so honourably and efficiently fulfilled, that he had made it a rule not to interfere in the management of the theatre; and that the utmost he could do was to recommend me strongly. The next day Mr. Wilkins left Norwich, and in a few days afterwards I was re-engaged, but at the reduced salary of a guinea per week, and on condition of making myself generally useful in the theatre, by undertaking all parts allotted to me, however trifling or disagreeable.

Being relieved from the dread of immediate want, my mind resumed its natural gaiety; and, resolving to postpone my ambitious efforts to a better opportunity, I entered at once into the amusements, and availed myself of the gratifications which were within my reach. Habit soon reconciled me to the degradation of delivering messages on the stage, and to the perpetual hissing of the audience. By degrees I lost the proud spirit which had once characterized me, and my ambition degenerated into the desire of shining as a tavern wit; I told droll stories, made bad puns, joined in every laugh, even though at my own expense, and became a very good-for-nothing sort of good fellow. I acquired a facility of accommodating myself to every kind of society; I could converse rationally with the enlightened, bawdy coarse jokes with the vulgar, and drink and smoke with all. My salary was, as may be supposed, unequal to such an expensive mode of life; but that was a very trifling consideration; for I lived, as it were, in the land of plenty, and although money was scarce with me, my credit was good at the Bowling-green. If I wished for a bottle of wine, or a glass of grog, I had nothing to do but or-

der it, and it was set before me. Inconsiderate fool ! I did not reflect that I was, by such means, squandering the property of my kind friend the landlord, while I was at the same time undermining my constitution, and wasting in idleness the most precious period of my life.

In this way matters went on for about four months, until the close of the Norwich season, the time at which the performers' benefits usually take place. Those whom public favour or private interest warranted in expecting a good house, set down their names, and gave security to the manager for the expenses, which were considerable, being about thirty pounds for each night. Amongst those I had no idea of enrolling myself; for I was too poor to command so large a sum as the charges amounted to, or indeed any sum, and too much out of public favour, if I could, to risk it. Too late to be of service to me, reflection was now forced upon me by necessity, and I bitterly repented the foolish course which I had during the last three months blindly followed. I had not only spent my income, but I had also involved myself, by incurring a heavy debt to Gurney for things which were not necessary, and which I had no prospect whatever of being able to discharge. To repay his kindness with such base ingratitude stung me to the soul : and without one self-approving recollection to mitigate the pain, I became a prey to the worst of all afflictions, an accusing conscience. The time for leaving Norwich was fast approaching, and I had not a shilling towards the expenses of the journey, which must

be accomplished, if I was to retain my situation in the theatre. The company were about to go to Ipswich for a season of six weeks, and, if I could not go with them, my engagement would be forfeited, and I must be reduced to beggary. I had fallen into the deepest of the dark pits of despair, and was about to perish in its stagnant waters, when the hand of friendship was outstretched to rescue me from its horrors, and the blessed light of hope again shed its cheering influence upon me. My excellent friend Gurney, pitying my sufferings, insisted upon my taking the chance of a benefit ; and, to obviate all difficulty, offered himself as security for the charges. I therefore entered the lists, and a night was allotted to me. When the time was fixed, Gurney exerted himself so effectually that the receipts of the house amounted to fifty pounds, and I cleared above all charges about twenty. Although this was a large sum in my eyes, yet it was not equal to the demands upon me, and I was unable fully to discharge my account with Gurney. When the time arrived for leaving the town, I was still indebted to him a few pounds, and I had not a shilling in my purse. Again was I under the necessity of trespassing on his friendship, and again did he relieve me from distress. He paid my coach fare to Ipswich, gave me a pound to keep my pocket, and, shaking me heartily by the hand at parting, desired me to consider the balance of my bill as paid. Kind, generous, warm-hearted fellow ! had I the wealth of the Indies, I must still be his debtor.

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#### THE DEMON-SHIP.

'TWAS off the Wash—the sun went down—the sea look'd black and grim,  
For stormy clouds, with murky fleece, were mustering at the brim;  
Titanic shades ! enormous gloom !—as if the solid night  
Of Erebus rose suddenly to seize upon the light !  
It was a time for mariners to bear a wary eye,  
With such a dark conspiracy between the sea and sky !

Down went my helm—close reef'd—the tack held freely in my hand—  
With ballast snug—I put about, and scudded for the land.

Loud his'd the sea beneath her lee—my little boat flew fast,  
But faster still the rushing storm came borne upon the blast.  
Lord ! what a roaring hurricane beset the straining sail !  
What furious sleet, with level drift, and fierce assaults of hail !  
What darksome caverns yawn'd before ! what jagged steeps behind !  
Like battle-steeds, with foamy manes, wild tossing in the wind.  
Each after each sank down astern, exhausted in the chase,  
But where it sank another rose and gallop'd in its place ;  
As black as night—they turned to white, and cast against the cloud  
A snowy sheet, as if each surge upturn'd a sailor's shroud :—  
Still flew my boat : alas ! alas ! her course was nearly run !  
Behold yon fatal billow rise—ten billows heap'd in one !  
With fearful speed the dreary mass came rolling, rolling fast,  
As if the scooping sea contain'd one only wave at last !  
It seem'd as though some cloud had turn'd its hugeness to a wave !  
It bring sleet began to beat beforehand in my face—  
I felt the rearward keel begin to climb its swelling base !  
I saw its alpine hoary head impending over mine !  
Another pulse—and down it rush'd—an avalanche of brine !  
Brief pause had I, on God to cry, or think of wife and home ;  
The waters closed—and when I shriek'd, I shriek'd below the foam !  
Beyond that rush I have no hint of any after dead—  
For I was tossing on the waste, as senseless as a weed.

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" Where am I ? in the breathing world, or in the world of death ?"  
With sharp and sudden pang I drew another birth of breath ;  
My eyes drank in a doubtful light, my ears a doubtful sound—  
And was that ship a *real* ship, whose tackle seem'd around ?  
A moon, as if the earthly moon, was shining up aloft ;  
But were those beams the very beams that I had seen so oft ?  
A face, that mock'd the human face before me watch'd alone ;  
But were those eyes the eyes of man that look'd against my own ?

Oh ! never may the moon again disclose me such a sight  
As met my gaze, when first I look'd, on that accursed night !]  
I've seen a thousand horrid shapes begot of fierce extremes  
Of fever ; and most frightful things have haunted in my dreams—  
Hyenas—cats—blood-loving bats—and apes with hateful stare,—  
Pernicious snakes, and shaggy bulls—the lion and she-bear—  
Strong enemies, with Judas looks, of treachery and spite—  
Detested features, hardly dimm'd and banish'd by the light !  
Pale-sheeted ghosts, with gory locks, upstarting from their tombs—  
All phantasies and images that fit in midnight glooms—  
Hags, goblins, demons, lemures, have made me all aghast—  
But nothing like that **GRIMLY ONE** who stood beside the mast !

His cheek was black—his brow was black—his eyes and hair as dark :  
His hand was black, and where it touch'd, it left a sable mark ;  
His throat was black, his vest the same, and when I look'd beneath,  
His breast was black—all, all was black—except his grinning teeth.  
His sooty crew were like in hue, as black as Afric slaves !  
Oh, horror ! e'en the ship was black that plough'd the inky waves ?

" Alas ! " I cried, " for love of truth and blessed mercy's sake,  
Where am I ? in what dreadful ship ? upon what dreadful lake ?  
What shape is that, so very grim, and black as any coal ?  
It is Mahound, the Evil One, and he has won my soul !  
Oh, mother dear ! my tender nurse ! dear meadows that beguiled  
My happy days, when I was yet a little sinless child ;  
My mother dear—my native fields, I never more shall see ;  
I'm sailing in the Devil's Ship, upon the Devil's Sea !"

Loud laugh'd that **SABLE MARINER**, and loudly in return  
His sooty crew sent forth a laugh that rang from stem to stern—  
A dozen pair of grimy cheeks were crumpled on the nonce—  
As many sets of grinning teeth came shining out at once :  
A dozen gloomy shapes at once enjoyed the merry fit,  
With shriek and yell, and oaths as well, like Demons of the Pit.  
They crow'd their fill, and then the Chief made answer for the whole :—  
" Our skins," said he, " are black, ye see, because we carry coal ;  
You'll find your mother sure enough, and see your native fields—  
For this-here ship has pick'd you up—the Mary Ann of Shields !"

## THE NUMIDIANS.\*

WE like the plan of this work much : variety of writers must, we think, please variety of tastes ; and here we have England's Olden Time, one of the best sketches of its author ; two well-told Scottish legends ; a very clever and *sure* true tale, the Heir Presumptive ; and divers others : so that discontented must the reader be, who throws the bill of fare by wholly unsatisfied. For ourselves, we are content to take the Numidians.

Lara, a celebrated Spanish chief, is on a night-watch ; and hears the sound of a horse passing at speed. "The horse was milk white—his long mane floated upon the night wind, which was roused, almost created, by the velocity of his motion ;—his make, though somewhat slight, was muscular, as well as beautiful—unchecked by curb, unfettered by harness or by housing, he bounded forward with the freedom of the desert, but without its wildness—for his master's voice was at once bit, and spur, and bridle-rein—it urged him to speed, it checked him short in a moment. Of the first of these the Spanish commander had proof almost at the moment he met his eye—of the second he was convinced very soon afterwards, for upon ordering twelve of his men forward to take the rider prisoner—extending, at the same time, the rest of his troops into a circle to surround him—the stranger with one word stopped his horse, and calmly waited the approach of his assailants. Lara had already recognised him as one of the famous Numidians who had come from the deserts of Africa to the aid of Boabdil. On his head he wore a black turban—on his body a short white tunic, crossed by a shining chain of silver, which bore his large and massive cimeter. His legs and arms were completely naked, with

the exception of the golden bracelets with which they were adorned. In his left hand he held his buckler—in his right three javelins. He stopped short, as we have said, and firmly awaited the attack of the twelve men who were detached against him. As they drew within reach, he threw his three darts. Each unseated a horseman, and rolled him in the dust. One word to his horse, and he was off with the speed of light—while the remaining nine troopers followed dispersedly. The Numidian, however, found his progress barred ; for Lara had already drawn the circle round him. He wheeled his gallant courser—avoided his pursuers—returned at full speed to the spot of the conflict—stooped without checking that speed, as he passed one of his victims—drew the javelin from his breast—and with it overthrew another of his pursuers, who now had again approached him. Meanwhile, Lara had beheld the conduct of the Numidian with extreme admiration. His bravery, his extreme skill in the management both of his weapons and his horse, had been displayed before one equally capable of estimating the excellence of all warlike exercises, and candid and generous in acknowledging it, although in the person of an enemy. Lara advanced towards the stranger ; and, ordering his men to keep their ranks,—who, stung with the loss of their comrades, were on the point of charging,—he thus addressed him : ' Brave African, it is enough. Do not prolong a fruitless resistance. Yield your arms to me. I can scarce restrain my soldiers—leave me the gratification of preserving so brave a life.' ' Life,' answered the Numidian, ' life is a boon only to the happy—to the wretched it is a burden. Rather than become a captive, I will lose it by thy hand !' So saying, he drew his cimeter, and

urged his horse upon the Spaniard. Lara threw down his lance, drew his sword, and met him midway. In courage and in skill it would be difficult to find two men more nearly matched : but the Castilian was sheathed in steel, while the Numidian had no defensive arms except a light buckler, which he wore upon his left arm. His javelins, in the use of which he had shown such fatal skill—and which, at ordinary times, served as a counterbalance to the long lances and coats of mail of the Christians—his javelins had all been cast. Had they been sent from the quiver of Azrael, the aim could not have been surer or more deadly. Each had borne death upon its wing ; and one might boast of a double victim. But now the African had only his cimeter and shield ; his bare arms and legs—his light tunic—his linen turban—would seem to be unequally matched against the casque, and corslet, and gauntlets, and cuisses of the steel-clad Spaniard. But in activity, both of horse and rider, the Numidian and his barb had vastly the advantage. There seemed, too, an unanimity, a community almost, of spirit between them, which was equally surprising and extraordinary. The horse seconded his master in every manœuvre both of attack and defence. He leaped into the air to give his descending blow more force—he sprang on one side to avoid that of his antagonist. The fable of the Centaur might almost be said to have been realized in them. Nor was the skill of the African inferior to the intelligence and activity of his gallant steed. His long cimeter swept through the air with a force, and descended in quick repeated blows with a weight, which rendered the armour of the Spaniard the safeguard of his life. In defence, too, he was equally adroit. His solitary buckler was always under Lara's blow, wherever it might fall. It served at once for helmet and cuirass—for gauntlet and for greave ; but its strength was unequal to its master's skill. The mighty stroke of

the redoubted Lara, delivered with his whole strength, at last cut into two the buckler which received its force ; clove the shoulder of the Numidian, and threw him to the earth. His gallant horse, on seeing his master fall, uttered that piercing cry which, from its rare occurrence, as well as its thrilling and unearthly tone, is perhaps the most appalling of all the sounds with which nature has gifted the animal creation. But this noble beast, not contented with thus lamenting his master, strove still to defend him. He covered his fallen body—and, standing upon his hind feet, reared into the air, and opposed, with his fore, the approach of Lara. As he turned, so did the horse ; his threatening feet formed a rampart over his rider's body. At length, seeing the whole Castilian troop draw in, the horse (which almost seemed to share his master's hatred of captivity) fled with the speed of the wind across the plain, and disappeared in the distance. Lara, in the meantime, approached his prisoner ; raised him from the earth—examined his wound, which he found had only penetrated the flesh,—and used towards him all those courtesies and amenities which were so familiar and so becoming to a brave and accomplished knight like this celebrated Spaniard."

The Numidian gives a spirited sketch of his life and love, and tells him how bitter his captivity ; for his wife has been trusted to the care of Osman, who "had dared to take advantage of the trust of hospitality to offend the ear of Zora with vows of love !—Lara, (he continues,) if the love of an African is fierce, his jealousy is furious. In his bosom it is the concentration of every passion—it sweeps away everything before the violence of its course. The whirlwind of his desert is not more utterly devastating. Everything is easy to us under its sway—everything is permitted. We are open, we are hospitable to friends and to strangers ; we are fond and faithful to our wives. But if the glance of an eye, the ex-

pression of a smile, appear to us to be directed towards them—blood, blood only, can wash the offence away. And blood should have washed away the offence of this insolent Moor; blood should have atoned for his having thus forgotten all that was due to the defenders of his country—to the guest beneath his roof. I was on my way to Carthame when your soldiers surrounded me. Perhaps I might have avoided them; but from you, sir, there was no escaping. The success of your arms has more than deprived me of life—it has deprived me of my best hope. Zora is in Osman's power, and I am the Spaniard's captive. Do you then wonder that I grieve? 'Cease to grieve, brave African,' Lara answered; 'cease to grieve—day has broken—our camp is at hand—I will go straightway to the king, and urge your release. To your captor he will not deny it. Meanwhile, rest and refresh yourself; in a few hours you will be able to proceed!' As he spoke thus, they arrived at the Spanish camp; and, after a short time Lara proceeded to the quarters of Ferdinand, to give the report of his nocturnal adventure. He found, however, the king just seated in his council, on affairs of great weight and moment. Lara, therefore, took his place and awaited till opportunity served to introduce his more immediate business. But the capture of the Numidian chief was, in the meanwhile, productive of other consequences. Zora had been anxiously awaiting the approach of Ishmael; and, from the causes with which the reader is acquainted, had awaited it in vain. Hour after hour, she thought every sound must be his footstep, till, as day dawned upon her, hope had almost sickened into despair. She imaged to herself every misadventure which might have happened to him on his way from Granada; and, at last, with that impatience of inactivity which suspense always brings with it, she determined to go forth to seek him; she hoped to meet him on his way. She procured the

war-dress of an Abencerrage; and, active and courageous, as her husband had represented her to be, she mounted on a courser, and, affecting to be charged with a commission from the governor, she passed out from the city without suspicion. She took the road towards Granada, and had not advanced far before she met an object which seemed to verify all her worst forebodings. It was the well-known horse of her husband; which, with his mane blood-bedabbled, and his air wild and terror-stricken, was rapidly approaching those towers to which his master had so often guided him. Zora recognized him at once; her heart sank within her at the sight: but she determined to know the extent of her misfortune. Placing herself, therefore, immediately across the path of the horse, as he drew near to her, she called to him by his name, in the tone in which she had so often caressed him. In despite of her dress, the faithful animal recognized her voice at once. He stopped short, and approaching her, rubbed his head gently against her knees. She patted his neck, and called upon the name of her husband aloud—'Ishmael!—Ishmael!' The horse seemed to understand her meaning, for he neighed and tossed his head into the air, as though in grief and lamentation. Zora took her resolution in an instant. She leaped upon his back, and throwing the rein loose upon his neck, the unwearied animal struck, at a rapid pace, into the direction from whence he had come. A moderate time brought her to the spot where the fight had taken place the night before, and where her husband had sunk under the blows of Lara. The bodies of the four Spaniards whom Ishmael had overthrown lay upon the ground. Zora perceived by the javelins that the blows had been dealt by him. But not far from them, she recognized his buckler, cloven in two, and, as well as the sand on which it lay, stained with his blood. She flung herself upon the ground, impregnated with that blood, and gave vent to the most

passionate grief. Suddenly a groan struck upon her ear; and, turning around, she perceived that it proceeded from one of the Spaniards, in whom some life was still left. She ran towards him; raised him; assisted him; questioned him. The wounded soldier, grateful for her care, collected the few Arabic words of which he was master, to inform her that it was a single Numidian, who, attacked upon his road, had pierced him and his companions, but that Lara had avenged them. The buckler was cloven, the blood was shed, by the hand of Lara. Zora gathered from this, that Ishmael had been slain by the Spanish leader. She asked from the wounded soldier the direction of the camp; he pointed it out, and she set off at speed to reach it, promising to send the wounded man his comrades' help. Even in her own distress, woman observes and remembers the distress of others; even when, as in this case, she dares face the dangers of war, she does all that in her lies to mitigate its horrors. Having reached the Spanish outposts, she desired to speak to the officer of the guard. He appeared:—‘Tell your commander,’ she exclaimed, ‘tell Lara, that the governor of Carthame awaits him here, with his sword in his hand—that he will fight with him, hand to hand, within his own lines. If he is not the most dastardly of men, he will not shrink from my challenge.’ The officer was struck with extreme surprise; but such was the respect of the Castilians for all who claimed the rights of the lists, that he complied with the stranger's request, and sent one of his men to Lara's quarters with the message. Meanwhile, the supposed Governor of Carthame refused even to dismount. She remained motionless, awaiting Lara's coming. After some delay, during which she fulfilled her promise to the wounded man, she saw her antagonist approach. He was seated upon a noble horse, clad in casque and coat of mail, and was armed only with a sword. The day had now

considerably advanced: it was twilight when the warriors met. They seemed animated by mutual enmity; without uttering one word they urged their coursers on each other, and struck a desperate blow, respectively, as they crossed. Both were wounded. On the return of their charge, the same thing again occurred; both struck, both were wounded. But such dilatory conflict seemed unfitted to their impatience. They sprang from their horses, and attacked each other hand to hand. The struggle was fierce and desperate. The inferior strength of Zora was compensated for by the loss of blood of her opponent, who would seem to have suffered more severely in the wounds which had been interchanged on horseback. He seemed to grow weaker and weaker, till at last she observed an opening in the fastenings of his armour, near the left shoulder, and hitting the spot with perfect accuracy of aim, her sword pierced him to the hilt. She drew it forth instantly, and again perforated him as he fell. ‘Die, wretch!’ she exclaimed, ‘die, barbarian! and know that thou fallest by a woman's hand! It is Zora, the wife of Ishmael, who thus avenges Ishmael's death!’ As she spoke these words, the dying man, in a voice which thrilled to the very marrow in her bones, exclaimed—‘Zora!—and it is by your hand I die!—and it is against your life that my blows have been aimed!’ She shuddered at the sound, threw herself upon him, freed him from his casque, and the last light of the evening fell upon the face of Ishmael, already clammy with the dews of death! Yes, it was her Ishmael whom she had slain: it was that husband whose death she came to avenge—whose death she had inflicted with her own hand! The soldier who had gone in from the outpost to Lara's tent had found he was still at the council. In awaiting his return, he conversed with the Numidian chief, and mentioned the purport of his errand. The name of the Governor of Carthame struck

like a trumpet-sound upon the ear of Ishmael. ‘Great Allah, I thank thee! thou hast delivered him into my hands !’ he exclaimed. He entreated—he implored the soldier to let him go in Lara’s place. He promised to answer for everything to him ; he loaded the man with his golden ornaments ; the soldier yielded to the united influence of his entreaties and gifts. Ishmael clothed himself in Lara’s arms. They were new to him. He was stiff and weak from his former wound, which the corset also galled. But he heeded nothing save to be revenged on Osman. The result we know. Zora was stupefied at this sight. ‘ Alas !’ said her husband, ‘ this is a sad farewell for me and thee, Zora !—but rather would I die thus by thy hand, with

the knowledge of thy all-sacrificing love, than live sultan of the whole world without thee ! Live, Zora, live. You would have died for my sake ; live for it. Comfort my father—no one can, like you. Bless you, Zora !’ His voice had been growing fainter and fainter ; it ceased ; he was no more ! As he ceased speaking, Zora bent herself upon him —she strained him to her heart in a close embrace—she pressed her lips to his in a long-drawn kiss—her last breath was drawn with it !”

Written by a circle of friends, this is the very volume for a winter’s evening around the hearth, and many a solitary reader will, we doubt not, pass a pleasant hour over the Tales of all Nations.

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#### A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

LATE in the evening of a summer’s day, in the year 1527, two travellers were seen approaching Florence from the south. As they descended the hills, and the Etrurian Athens, with its fair white walls lay before them, bathed in the glorious light of an Italian sunset, whose magic hues still hovered over the tops of the distant mountains ; while the woods that skirted them stood out with their deep and solemn shadow, in rich harmonious contrast against the glowing sky,—the elder of the travellers, whose bearing rather than his dress proclaimed him the superior, reined in his horse, and sat motionless, absorbed in the contemplation of the scene before him. The other checked his steed likewise, rather, it should seem, from respect to his companion than from admiration of the landscape ; for he cast an indifferent eye around, and then began muttering an Ave Maria, that the time might not be altogether thrown away.

“By St. Anthony, this is a glorious sight !—what thinkest thou, Giascupo ?”

“Aye, Signor, it is well enough,” replied Giascupo : “but I think that as it is a good half league to Florence, we had better prick on our horses, or the gates will be closed.”

“ You are right,” said the other, rousing himself, and putting his horse to speed.

They reached the city just in time to gain admittance that night. The travellers alighted at the first inn, and seated themselves on a bench before the door, where two or three of the better sort of the citizens were eagerly discussing the affairs of the republic over their wine-cups. The street in which the inn stood, presented an animated and pictorial effect, as the eye rested on the long perspective of houses, built after the old Italian fashion, with their deep embayed windows, fantastically carved, and now gilded with the last rays of the setting sun ; the groups of citizens in their picturesque dresses, some sitting before their doors, singing to the accompaniment of the lute —others in passionate discourse on the rival factions, whose discord at that time set all Italy in a flame,

presented countenances and attitudes worthy of a Raphael.

"Your Florence, Signori, wears a different aspect from some of the cities I passed through in my way hither," said the elder traveller, at length breaking silence.

"You are a traveller, then, Signor," said one of the persons addressed. "Perhaps you can tell us whether it be true that Charles of Bourbon is to be joined by the Regent of Naples, in his attack upon Rome."

"I have heard so."

"Shame," rejoined the other, with flashing eyes, "that one who bears so noble a name should league with felons and murderers in laying waste his native land!"

"Felons and murderers!—these, methinks, are strange names to apply to the followers of Charles, among whom may be reckoned some of the noblest in Italy."

"You cannot deny that the Duke has such in his service: and as to his nobles, I hold them little better in espousing such a cause."

The cheek of the traveller was flushed with crimson as he involuntarily grasped the dagger beneath his cloak; but he stifled his emotion, and said calmly—"A large number of your fellow-citizens, then, Signor, are like to fall under your evil report. It is said that the Emperor has as many well-wishers as the Pope, in Florence."

"He lies most foully who says so!" said the Florentine, starting fiercely from his seat.

"Gently, good Antonio," said a third, who had hitherto remained a silent listener, "this cavalier does but repeat what he has heard, doubtless, without giving it credit."

The traveller's eye glanced at the speaker, as if he suspected a snare in the moderation of his words. He was a man advanced in life, with a watchful eye, and a cool, wary countenance; which did not greatly please the inspector.

"You are right, Signor," he rejoined, with an air of indifference.

"I meant no offence, but your friend is somewhat fiery."

"He is young," said the other. "You and I, who have seen more years over our heads, can talk without quarrelling, though we may differ in opinion."

But the traveller seemed to have no inclination to accept the implied invitation to a prolonged discussion. He arose, and adjusting his cloak, ordered his servant to bring out the horses, and bade them good evening.

"There goes a spy of the Ghibeline faction; but I will watch his motions," muttered Antonio between his teeth; and snatching up his sword, he followed in the same direction. For some time he kept the horsemen in sight, till his progress was impeded by the crowd following in the train of the Gonfalonier, who was returning from council, in state. Before he extricated himself they were gone. Still, however, Antonio, who was a youth of fierce passions, and hated the opposite faction with an intensity known only to the parties in a civil discord, kept up the chase till the night was far advanced. While he hesitated whether to continue the pursuit, or return home, two persons suddenly issued from a low door near the church of the Annunziata, near which he stood, and remained for some time in deep consultation. The street was dark, but the lamp burning in a niche before an image of the Virgin, discovered to Antonio's eager gaze the countenances of the elder traveller, and a person whom he knew to be in the service of a nobleman suspected of a correspondence with the Emperor. Presently the former drew a purse from his bosom, and gave it to the other, who took it hastily and disappeared. The stranger turned also to depart; but Antonio sprung forward, and crying "Traitor!—Spy!—Ghibeline!"—attacked him so vigorously, that the other, taken by surprise, had scarcely time to draw his sword before Antonio's furious outcry attracted several persons to the spot; who, on hearing the exclama-

tion, joined in the fray. The stranger planted his back against the wall, and defended himself with such superior skill, that had the odds been less against him, must speedily have secured the victory. As it was, he began to feel exhausted by so unequal a contest; when an auxiliary appeared in the person of a youth, who, shocked by the unfairness of the combat, ranged himself on the side of the stranger, and bestowed his blows with such right good-will, that the assailers, in their turn, began to give ground. Amid the confusion caused by the raised voices and clashing swords, they did not heed the approach of half a dozen men, clothed in crimson, and carrying halberds, till their swords were struck, and they themselves arrested in the name of the republic. "The city guard, by St. Peter!" exclaimed the stranger's ally. "Follow me, Signor:" and with a dexterous jerk, he threw down the man nearest him, leaped over the crossed halberds of the guards, and fled with the speed of lightning. Both ran till the cries of the pursuers died away in the distance. They stopped to take breath; and the youth suddenly faced round on his companion, and said, with a look of recollection:—"And now, Signor, that we are safe, will you tell me what you were fighting about?"

"A proper question, after risking your life," said the other, laughing: "I think you should have asked before."

"I had not time; but, Signor, you are hurt."

"A mere scratch, which I will speedily cure. I am a stranger in this city—can you direct me to the house of one Bertuccio, a notary?"

"Bertuccio!" ejaculated the youth,—"what would you with him?"

"I have business."

"Oh, if you have business, well: but if you seek a kind Samaritan to bind up your wounds, you will not find one in Messer Bertuccio."

"You know him, then?"

"Ay, Signor—so well, that I wonder how any one should willingly seek him; seeing that I have dwelt

in his house some years, and long for nothing so much as to run away from it."

"You are his relation, or perhaps his apprentice?"

"Neither, by the blessing of Heaven. Some years ago, when the Emperor's troops laid waste Perugia, I was left sprawling amid the ruins of a sacked town, as neither worth killing nor carrying away. Messer Bertuccio was then journeying in Perugia, and his wife would have him take care of me; which he was willing enough to do, while the price of the jewels about me answered the charge twice over, and his wife lived. She is dead, and I"—

"And you," said the stranger, who had listened to him with deep interest—"are you, who have given this night such proof of a gallant spirit—are you content to waste your youth at the desk of a pitiful notary, when all Italy is in a flame; and when valour may win a prize worthy an Emperor's crown?"

"Content!" said the youth, with a cheek of flame, and dashing from him with violence the ink-horn at his girdle, which had revealed his profession to his companion—"is the eagle content to perch with the carrion crow? No; but I am content to herd with swine, till Messer Bertuccio can no longer say that I owe him aught; and then I will, with my sword, carve out a fortune for myself, that the noblest in Italy may envy. Signor, this is the house you seek."

They entered a long narrow passage, on one side of which was a door. The youth pushed it, and admitted his companion into a room about eight feet square; one side of which was occupied by a desk, black with age, and heaped with papers. The floor was covered with huge piles of parchment; and by the faint glimmer of an old lamp, suspended from the ceiling, Messer Bertuccio was discovered poring over a deed. He was a little old man, so pinched with age and avarice, that he resembled an aged ape. At the noise of

their entry he raised his head ; and fixing his sharp, rat-like eyes on the youth, said, in a querulous tone—“ Well, Signor Cesario, what more brawls, anon—there’s blood upon thy face !—I would it were from thy heart. I warrant I must to the Podesta again : thou hast cost more scudi than thy brains are worth. Ha ! a stranger hast thou brought : some bravo, to murder the old man, for his gold !” And instinctively his shaking hand grasped a dagger that lay beside him.

“ Messer Bertuccio, do you not know me ?”

“ *Sanctissima Maria ! ora pro nobis !*” said the old man, crossing himself with a look of affright. “ The Signor Adimari in Florence ?—Ha, Cesario ! why dost thou linger here ?—wouldest learn the old man’s secrets, that thou mayest rifle his strong box ? Ha !”

“ Tush !” said Adimari, “ there is no cause to fear, Messer Bertuccio : I will answer for this youth ; he has done me good service to night, and I will reward him accordingly : but of that anon. Cesario, my friend, leave us now : my business requires despatch—I will speak with thee by and by.”

The conference between Adimari and Bertuccio lasted till midnight. During the whole time, Cesario paced up and down the passage with impatient steps. Once or twice he caught the sound of his own name ; and this, coupled with the demeanour of Adimari, awakened in his youthful bosom hopes and feelings he could not crush, and yet feared to indulge. When the door opened, and Adimari’s voice was heard inquiring for him, his heart’s tumultuous throbs almost deprived him of sensation. Adimari smiled as he looked on Cesario’s burning cheek and flashing eye. “ I would wager,” said he, “ that thy thoughts anticipate my purpose. What sayest thou, Cesario, to quitting the pen for the sword, and serving with me under the valiant and renowned General, Charles of Bourbon ?”

The youth grasped Adimari’s hand, in gratitude too big for words. Adimari again smiled. “ Be ready then to quit Florence with me to-morrow ; and keep this,”—dropping a purse into his hands, as he left the house—“ thou wilt find more wants than there are pieces.”

“ Has he given thee gold, good Cesario ?” said Bertuccio, advancing towards him with trembling steps, gloating eyes, and withered shaking hands, extended as if to clutch the glittering bait.

Cesario looked on him for a moment with unutterable scorn. Then taking out a few pieces of gold, he flung the purse to the miserable dolt. “ Take it, Messer Bertuccio—and farewell. Now I owe you nothing.”

On the following day, before the sun had risen above the horizon, Adimari, accompanied by Cesario and Giacopo, was far on his way to the head-quarters of the Duke of Bourbon’s army. Adimari had been employed by the Ghibeline party to negotiate with those nobles of Florence who were disaffected to the republican government ; and not feeling himself safe in the Florentine territory, did not relax his speed till they were out of it. By the time they reached Bracciano, the army had moved forward, and encamped near the abbey of Farfa. It was a brilliant and enlivening spectacle to see the extended line of tents, far as the eye could reach ; the venerable and majestic abbey, with its magnificent woods flanking in the background ; the parties of soldiers, in their various costumes, galloping about the fields, their arms glittering in the sunshine ; and to hear their cries of joy ringing in the clear air, as they saw the coveted prize—“ the Eternal City !” rising before them, in its time-hallowed magnificence. In the midst of the field was the tent of the Duke of Bourbon, distinguished by the Imperial eagle, and white standard, waving proudly over it. The royal leader was surrounded by officers of high rank ; but it was im-

possible to mistake for a moment the noble form of that graceful Prince whose refusal of the proffered hand of a Queen had driven him into rebellion against his sovereign, and well nigh cost him his life. Charles received Adimari with his usual graciousness, and appointed him to an honourable post in his own regiment, which he was to lead in person to the assault. In an army composed, like Charles's, of adventurers of all nations, felons, and banditti, there was little discipline observed. In defiance of the Duke's injunctions, large bodies of the soldiery scoured the country in every direction; carrying off the cattle, maltreating, and sometimes murdering the inhabitants, and burning whole villages in mere wantonness. On the evening preceding the assault, Adimari went in pursuit of a party who had strayed beyond their limits; and Cesario's yet uncorrupted heart, sickening with the mad riot of the camp, found relief in attending him. As they were returning by the Campo Santo, Cesario lingered to enjoy a scene so new to him, till his companions were out of sight. The moon had risen with a brilliancy unknown in these northern climes, and by her light he could distinctly see the sentinels pacing the ramparts of the Castle of St. Angelo. The wild uproar of the camp, softened in the distance, rose occasionally on the air, as if to make the stillness that succeeded more apparent. Cesario rode slowly on, plunged in those blissful reveries of youth, when fame, and happiness, and glory, seem not phantoms, to lure us to destruction, but visions, "palpable to feeling as to sight;" when he was roused from his dream by rough voices, demanding his name, and what he did there. Four horsemen had approached, unheard on the soft turf, and surrounded him, before he was aware. "A spy of the Bourbon, by the keys of St. Peter!" said one—"I will knock him on the head, and leave his bones to whiten, for an example to the rest;" and he raised his carbine: but Cesario recovering from

his surprise, discharged his piece by way of answer, and attempted to dash through them. In an instant his arms were seized and pinioned—his eyes bound; and one of the men taking his horse's bridle, the whole party returned to Rome at full speed. When Cesario was set at liberty, he found himself in a guard-room, filled with soldiers. At the upper end, before a stone table, sat an officer, whose commanding front and stately bearing announced one high in authority. This was the renowned Orazio Baglione, whose valour had nearly made him master of his native Perugia, and then in the service of the Pope.

One of the soldiers who had captured Cesario began to relate his adventure; but hardly had the word "spy" escaped his lips, when the boy, wresting his own pike from his hand, felled him to the ground, saying, "Noble general, he lies most foully—I am no spy, but a soldier."

"Ha!" said Baglione, "thou art a bold youth; 'tis a pity such a one should be a Ghibeline. How long hast thou served Charles of Bourbon?"

"I have never served at all, yet," replied Cesario; "and by my faith, I think I never shall, seeing that I have met with such a mischance at the onset." The tone of boyish petulance with which he spoke, contrasted so oddly with his previous boldness, that Baglione and the soldiers laughed aloud. Cesario looked fiercely from one to the other, guessing that he was the object of ridicule, though unconscious why. "By your leave, Signor," said he, "it is neither the part of a soldier nor a nobleman to insult an enemy, whom accident has placed in his power."

Baglione, too generous to be offended at his hardihood, instantly composed his countenance, and questioned him in a more conciliatory tone. "Well, good youth," said he, when Cesario was silent, "I like thine ambition well; it is an honourable one, and shall be gratified, if thou art content to follow Baglione, instead of the Bourbon. In other

words, wilt thou flesh thy maiden sword in defence of thy native land, or league with traitors in subjugating her to a foreign power?"

Cesario's face glowed like fire, but he spoke not. His early education in Florence had early enlisted his prejudices to the Guelphic faction; and the riot and debauchery of Charles's camp were such as to fill his youthful mind with horror. His pride, too, was gratified by the question of the famed Baglione; while, on the other hand, he considered his honour pledged to Adimari and the Duke of Bourbon. The penetrating eye of Baglione read in a moment what was passing in his mind. Without pressing him farther, he committed him to the charge of an officer, with orders to use no more restraint than was necessary to prevent his leaving the city.

As soon as the first faint streaks of light were visible in the east, the cries of the people, mingled with the shouts of the soldiers and the roar of artillery, told that the assault had begun. Cesario followed the officer into the streets, which were filled with the populace; some prostrate before the numerous images, or swelling the train of the Pontiff, as he proceeded in grand procession, carrying the Host, and attended by all the Cardinals in Rome to the church of the Vatican, to implore the protection of Heaven. Cesario rushed to the walls with the instinct of a war-horse, at the sound of the trumpet; and in a short time found himself, to his great astonishment, fighting zealously by the side of that very Baglione whom but the day before he expected to meet as an enemy. Bourbon, conspicuous from his white mantle, was foremost in the attack, encouraging his men, by gesture and example, to fix the scaling ladders, which he was the first to mount. Scarcely had his foot pressed the step, when a discharge from the ramparts dashed him breathless to the ground. The besieged uttered a cry of triumph, and for a moment his troops fell back in dismay—the next,

the charge was renewed with redoubled fury. The assault continued three days. On the fourth, Cesario was sent by Baglione to the castle, with a message to the chief engineer, Antonio Santa Croce. As he was returning, there was a cry—a shout of mingled triumph and despair—that seemed to rend the skies: flying parties of their own troops, and women running hither and thither, with their screaming children, told the appalling truth—the city was carried! From the quarter of Trastavere, a body of the German auxiliaries, headed by the Prince of Orange, came rushing like a whirlwind, carrying death to whatever opposed them. The soldiers deserted the walls, and thronged the streets, disputing every inch of ground with desperate valour. The yells of the combatants—the deafening roar of the cannon—the maddening shrieks of females, in the grasp of the licentious soldiery, piercing the ear with horrid clearness, through all the infernal uproar—the streets and squares heaped with the slain, and running with blood—all the ghastly sights and sounds of a city taken by storm—struck horror and dismay to the bosom of Cesario. All hell seemed open to his view. Still he fought like a young lion at bay, dealing no second blows; and himself, as if by a miracle, escaping almost unhurt, till he reached the square of the Vatican, where the Pope's guards were in vain attempting to defend the entrance to the church. Over gory carcasses, the dying and the dead, Cesario forced his way into the nave, just in time to strike down a Huguenot soldier, who, with a cry of "Down with Antichrist and his supporters!" aimed a furious blow at the head of Baglione. Hand to hand the death-struggle was maintained, till the Pontiff made his escape by a secret passage, to the castle of St. Angelo; and then Baglione, making a desperate sally from the church, Cesario lost sight of him.

The conflict raged till night with unabated fury. To add to the hor-

ror of the scene, the enemy, after rising the houses and churches, set fire to them. Amidst the tumult and the smoke, it was impossible to distinguish friends from foes.

Faint with the loss of blood, and parched with intolerable thirst, Cesario crawled towards one of the public fountains. The fire from a neighbouring palace shed a lurid glare upon the ghastly faces of numbers who had expired in a vain attempt to reach the waters. One miserable wretch had fallen in, and the stream was polluted with his blood. Cesario turned, shuddering, away, and sat down on the steps. Suddenly an appalling shriek from a female voice struck on his ear; and a young and lovely woman, with hair dishevelled, and garments torn and bloody, rushed from the burning palace, followed by a soldier. With frantic agony she clasped Cesario's body, and implored him to save her. Before he could reply, the savage sprung upon his victim, with the howl of an infuriated wolf. Inspired, for the moment, with superhuman strength, Cesario disengaged his right arm, and plunged his dagger in the ruffian's heart; then throwing the insensible form of the lady across his shoulder, he made his way back to the church of the Vatican, striking indiscriminately at all he met. It was nearly deserted; with one wild effort, he reached the high altar and the secret door. There nature failed at once, and he sunk, with his burden, to the ground. In the fall, his foot touched the spring, and they fell, together, into the subterranean passage!

\* \* \* \* \*

Two years after the sacking of Rome, a splendid festival was held in the Colonna palace. A thousand lamps poured a flood of light upon the gorgeous room, where countless throngs of gallant nobles, and bright dames, moved gaily to the sound of the softest music. But who is she, the fairest where all are fair?—the jewels on whose brow were dim to the eyes that flashed beneath!—whose cheek and lip but mocked the

roses twined in her clustering hair!—who half smiling, half blushing, all loveliness, listens, with downcast eye and half-averted face, to the youth at her side, in manhood's earliest prime—who gazes on her with eyes radiant with love and joy? It was a daughter of the illustrious house of Colonna, and Cesario Baglione—he who, in calling her his bride, had fulfilled his youthful boast, and won a prize of brighter worth than the crown of the imperial Charles.

In the midst of the marriage festival, when all was revelry and joy, a servant approached, and whispered the bridegroom. He started, and changed colour. His lovely Olympia spoke to him with an air of alarmed and timid tenderness: but he heard her not, and quitted the hall.

In an unfurnished chamber, half-lighted by a single torch, a stranger stood muffled in a dark mantle. As Cesario approached, he stepped forward, and dropped it—it was Adimari!

"Signor Cesario Baglione," said he, "I come to claim your protection. The league between the Pope and the Emperor has made me a beggar and an outcast; and there are many in the court of Rome who seek my life."

"Fear not, Adimari, my friend, to whom I owe all my present bliss!" said Cesario, rushing to embrace him—"wait my return."

He hurried to the festal hall. In a few brief sentences, he explained all to his bride—"But for Adimari, my Olympia, I had never known thee!"

It was enough—Olympia went to throw herself at her father's feet, and never rose till he had promised his powerful intercession with the Pontiff.

At that time nothing was refused to Colonna. A few weeks saw Adimari reconciled to the Church; and Cesario whispered to his friend, as he presented him to his bride Olympia—"Did I not prophesy truly when I said, I would carve out for myself a fortune the proudest in Italy might envy?"

## SIR GILES HUNGERFORD'S FAREWELL TO LIFE.

THE SUBJECT FROM "THE TOR HILL."

A KNIGHT of valour and of rank lay on his couch of death,  
And thus he to his kinsman spake, with faint and fleeting breath :—  
" Farewell ! Farewell ! soon I must lie within the darksome grave,  
Nor longer gaze on this fair world and all its beauties brave.

" I shall not hear of harnessed knights, the loud and welcome tread,  
For heavy though their armour sound—it cannot wake the dead :  
To onset, will the herald cry, at tilt and tournament,  
When I am slumbering in the tomb, and all my strength is spent.

" My gallant roan that bore we well, his task of duty's o'er,  
And he shall feel his master's spur, and hear his voice no more ;  
And mute must be the trumpet's shrill and spirit-stirring blast,  
At which my heart was wont to leap in days of battle past.

" Full brightly will the torches beam upon the festal board,  
And shine upon the warrior's casque, and on his trusty sword ;  
But 'mid the knights and ladies fair, within the banner'd hall,  
Vacant is now Sir Giles's place, for ay, amongst them all.

" Farewell to lovely woman's smile, to skilful minstrel's strain ;  
And to mine own paternal home, on merry England's plain :  
I never more shall hunt the stag around my chases wide,  
Nor midst the green and stately trees with hawk and falcon ride.

" The hand of death is on me now, and life is fading fast,  
And all earth's joys and pageantries with me will soon be past ;  
Farewell, then, Dudley ! once again, and thanks for all thy care !  
I pray thee let the mass be said for my poor soul's welfare."

## THE WITCH OF THE EAST CLIFF.

WHO now believes in ghosts, or shudders at the recital of a tale from the land of spirits ? The apparitions that haunted the dark ages have vanished before the light of reason and revelation—the fairies have forsaken their green rings in the forest—the merry hobgoblin has dwindled into a mere vapour, and quenched his wandering light in the marsh—and the country church-yard is no longer guarded by the flitting shadows of the beings “whose years are with those beyond the flood.” The mouldering remains of the fathers of the village are left in undisturbed and lone serenity ; the wayfaring man rests his weary limbs on the once haunted stile, and carelessly views the moonbeams glancing on their graves. A citizen would shrug up his shoulders, and ridicule the absurdity of ghosts in the nineteenth century ; and even in the country,

only a faint shadow of the old superstition remains.

The recital of such tales round a winter fire-side, when the wind roared without, and bent the old elms over our antiquated mansion, was ever hailed by me with interest and pleasure. They constituted an indefinite charm, giving rise to ideas which bordered on the wild and wonderful. Yet I was ever a fearless disbeliever in supernatural appearances. They amused and called forth the powers of a wayward imagination, but made no deeper impression. It is not of the spectre that haunts W— Hall I mean to speak ; —that ancient edifice, with its round towers, and Gothic gateways, whose venerable front has seen ages pass away, and succeeding generations tread its oaken floors. What would such a building be in the country, where the old superstition still fond-

ly lingers without its attendant spirit? I remember listening, when a child, with intense interest, to the old house-keeper's details respecting the lady in white, who, as the hall clock strikes twelve, glides down the great staircase, crosses with hurried steps the stone court, and, amidst piteous sobs and groans, vainly essays, at the cistern in the centre of the quadrangle, to obliterate from her hands and garments the stains of blood. Time has swallowed up some fearful legend connected with this spectre. We may conjecture that this second Lady Macbeth acted a conspicuous part in some tragedy, for which the superstitious peasantry attached this punishment to her restless ghost.

Mine is a more marvellous, and, strange to say, a more improbable tale, although I had it from the mouth of the principal actor in the drama, who as religiously believes the wonders he relates, as a good Catholic does the miracles performed by Prince Hohenlohe. I was staying with a widowed aunt, in the summer of 1822, at a small seaport town on the eastern coast of England, and by mere accident became acquainted with the narrator—Joel Skelton. His wife was renowned throughout the adjacent country for her superior skill in laying out a corpse, and was a sort of female undertaker, performing the last offices to all who died in her vicinity. When difficult cases occurred, she was assisted in these melancholy duties by her husband, a short, stout, hale old man, who, to judge by his appearance, might have bidden defiance to the powers of darkness. Few who contemplated Joel Skelton's comical red face and merry grey eyes, would have thought him a fitting subject for witches and hobgoblins to play their pranks on. Returning from the beach, one fine moonlight night, I happened to pass by Joel's little cabin. The jovial proprietor was seated on the bench, within the ivy-covered porch, which commanded a fine view of the German Ocean, talking with great energy to an old weather-beaten seaman, leaning against the door-way. This

grey-haired auditor held the can of beer untasted in his hand, and had suffered the ashes to expire in his pipe, while listening, with open mouth and expanded eyes, to Skelton's marvellous relations. Curiosity tempted me to draw nearer; and I soon had the tale, with the improvements and additions which a hundred relations had furnished.

" You have heard, neighbour Sampson, of old Rachel?" said Joel, twisting his Welch wig a little on his head, which was always the prelude of a story—" old Rachel Lagon, who lived forty years ago just under the brow of the East Cliff?"

" Aye! aye! Master Joel!" responded the seamen, " to my cost—if I cast my eyes on the hag before we set sail, our vessel was sure to be crossed by contrary winds; and she threw such a mist before us, that you would have thought Old Nick himself stood at the helm. Let us steer our course which way we would, we always found ourselves off the Barnet, or near the accursed Goodwin Sands. Many's the good ship she has sunk with her spells, which left the port with a fair wind, and never again entered the harbour."

" She was old Rachel when I was a boy, and that's a many years ago," resumed Joel; " and her name was up for a witch through the country. I was a wild reckless dog; and as to fear—at that time I had still to learn the meaning of the word. My father died when I was young, and left me to bring up two sisters; which I did, to the best of my poor abilities. In the course of time, the girls went to a distance—each in respectable servitude. God bless them both! they are dead and gone; but at that period they were my only care, and I loved them dearly. It was a sore privation to me that we met only once a year, which was generally at Christmas. Do you remember my uncle, old Nat. Howe, who kept the Jolly Fisherman?"

" Do I, Joel! aye, many's the time that I have wished for a draught of his home-brewed when my throat has been as dry as a salt herring, and

the wind has been piping through the shrouds. But what of old Nat? He has cast his anchor in the church yard, and his name is nearly forgotten."

" His house was our place of meeting," said Joel; " and he gave us a hearty welcome and plenty of good cheer. It was on one of these occasions that my first acquaintance with old Rachel commenced. The fiddle had been going for several days ; and we kept it up with dancing and drinking from night to night. The song and the jest were not wanting ; and many a young heart was merry then, which is long since cold in the grave. The hour of parting came at length, and a bitter hour it was to me. My wife was a smart rosy girl at that time of day, and was one of the company. She lived with my sister Deborah, at D— Hall (which you know is a long way up the London road.) They had to cross W— Heath, and that desolate track of moorland, which is now converted into sheep walks, and a terrible lonesome place it was. I always saw the girls over the heath ; and while they were putting on their hats, I, half seas over, began bragging of my courage. My swaggering speeches attracted the attention of an old sailor, who had been quietly smoking his pipe in the chimney corner. Willing to put my boasted courage to the test, he dared me to stop at old Rachel's cottage, and have my fortune told. The frolic pleased me—I swore to make acquaintance with the witch before the moon was an hour older. Off we set, the moon being bright, the wind high, and the frost hard upon the ground. Our path, for a mile, lay along the beach. The sea was fearfully rough, and there was one fine vessel struggling with the breakers. As we approached Rachel's hut, we heard the old beldame singing, and muttering spells to herself. Her song I shall never forget—it sounded like the meeting of angry waters when the wind rolls back the advancing billow, and strews the beach with foam. It was as near as I can recollect, to the following effect :—

' Hark ! to the rave  
Of wind and wave !  
Hark to the seamew's cry !  
The moon is bright,  
She casts her light  
From a wild and stormy sky.'

' Like wreaths of snow,  
Round yon vessel's prow,  
The flashing waters fly !  
The sounding surge  
Shall ring its dirge,  
Tossing the foam on high.'

' No prayers shall save  
Her crew from the grave,  
That darkly yawns below.  
They cling to the shrouds,  
And watch the clouds,  
As the rack drives to and fro.'

' They shall hope and pray,  
For the dawning day,  
As the angry waters rise ;  
The morn shall beam  
On the ocean stream,  
But never meet their eyes.'

" Oh that you could but have heard the hag sing it, as she stood upon a piece of the broken cliff, tossing her withered bony arms to and fro, with her grey hair streaming on the breeze. At the sight of her, my spirits sunk, and my boasted courage was all gone. For my oath's sake, however, I determined to address her ; and, putting a bold face on the matter, I stepped up to her, told her my errand, and requested her to tell our fortunes.

" 'Fortunes!' screamed the witch, ' God give you fortune ! I cannot tell your fortunes !'

" ' How now, dame,' said I (carefully omitting the old for fear of offending her) ' every body knows that you deal in such contraband articles, therefore what's the use of denying it ? I came here to have my fortune told, and will not depart till I have learnt from you my fate.'

" ' You are a merry reckless fellow,' returned the witch ; ' and your fate is to be poor, and to work hard all the days of your life. That pretty girl who leans on your arm, and trembles like an aspen leaf, will share your poverty, and fill your house with children.' Neighbour Sampson, would not this alone prove her to be a witch ! What she then told me, has it not come to pass ?'

"Wonderful! wonderful! Master Joel," again muttered the old tar; who appeared deeply interested in the narrative.

"Well, man," continued old Joel, "I was so overjoyed at the prospect of having Hetty, that all my fears vanished; and I accepted the bag's invitation to step into her hut, and taste her beer. The girls screamed, and pulled me back; but all in vain. Had Old Nick himself stood in the door-way, in the humour I was in I could have braved the devil. The girls dared not leave me, and in a few seconds we were all seated round the woman's fire. You have heard the old saying—'Woe betide him who eats with a witch'—Yet, in spite of every remonstrance, I partook largely of her cheer, and drank copious draughts of the best ale that ever come out of a cask: and this it was that gave her power over me. When my head was warm with liquor, the witch said, in a facetious tone, 'Joel Skelton, you have proved yourself a brave young man; but I will call you a brave man *indeed*, if you dare descend the cliff, and look into my shed.' 'Aye! or into your bed, either,' returned I, as bold as a lion. She made a silent laugh to herself as I left the room, with plenty of pot valour in my head, but my heart none of the lightest. As I approached the shed, which stood at the bottom of the cliff, and was composed of pieces of wreck, and thatched with seaweed, I felt an oppression of breath, and a sensation of fear, such as I had never before experienced; yet, determining not to yield to an old woman, I called pride to my aid, and entered the hovel. The moon was as bright as day, and I could see into the farthest corner of the place, which was entirely empty, all but a heap of old dried nets in a corner. I now laughed at my imaginary terrors, and went singing back, to shew the success of my adventure.—'Well and bravely done, Joel!' said the accursed hag, in a taunting manner; 'but you dare not go a second time?'

"Nay, what should hinder me?"

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returned I; 'neither you nor all the powers of darkness should bar a path where I wished to enter.' 'Bold words,' said the witch, 'and bravely spoken; but experience alone proves what fire can be struck from the flint.' —Her look and mien staggered me; yet I entered the shed a second time, with less fear, and more confidence in my own courage. I looked boldly round it; my eye fell on no other object than the heap of nets in the corner; but I could no longer withdraw them from the spot—the heap appeared to me in motion—I looked again—I heard a loud drumming murmuring sound; and it began slowly to rise."

"Why, Joel," said I, greatly amused by the solemnity of his manner, "it was a cat."

"It was the devil!" returned Skelton, "as the sequel will prove. Did I not see his black head and fiery eyes? And I returned to the hut in a cold sweat. When I entered it, the old hag burst into a wild laugh. 'What thief have you seen in my shed, Joel, that has stolen the colour from your cheeks, loosened your joints in their sockets, and made your hair to rise?'

"Your master! but not mine!" returned I, motioning the girls to be off.—'Do not be in a hurry,' said the witch, 'to depart. The night is not far advanced; and I will promise you a speedy journey home. Besides a man of your courage will never object a third time to look into my shed?'

"I was now safe out of her cabin; and I shook my fist at her, and told her, I would see her and her shed at the bottom of the sea first. Her fiendish laugh followed us a long way over the heath; and when we turned back to look at her cabin, it appeared all in a blaze of light. This adventure threw a great damp on our spirits; every effort to rally them proved unsuccessful; and I parted with the girls at the first tollgate on the London road, with a very heavy heart.

"I had six miles to return over

the heath. Behind me was a dark line of pine groves, which skirted the high road ; and before me an extensive tract of land, without a tree or house to diversify the prospect, which was bounded to the right and left ; and before me, by the ocean, whose stormy and menacing aspect was clearly revealed by the brightest moonlight I ever beheld. The witch, and my adventure with her, were almost forgotten, in the anguish I felt at parting with my sweetheart for another long year ; and I was thinking to myself, if we should ever meet again, when the sound of horse's hoofs rapidly advancing over the frosty ground met my ear. Surprised at a horseman's crossing the heath at that late hour, I turned round to ascertain who it might be ; but no language can express my terror, on beholding a jet black steed, with a flowing mane, and tail of fire streaming in the blast, advancing at that furious pace towards me. The earth trembled beneath his hoofs, and his course was marked by a blue track of light from the pine forest. Oh, how I wished, in that extremity of fear, that the ground beneath my feet would yawn and cover me—that I could hide myself in the bowels of the earth ! There was no time for reflection—my memory had forsaken me. The name of God trembled on my lips, but had not the power to give it utterance. The appalling steed came thundering towards me—flames encompassed me—and I was caught up as by a whirlwind on to his back. My senses reeled—the earth—the ocean—and the pine forest—whirled in perpetual mazes round me. I called aloud for help—I tried to disengage myself, as the sleeper does who struggles with the nightmare, but a supernatural power chained me to my seat. My brain seemed on fire, and my mind was wrought up to a pitch of frenzy, when the cold moonbeams glanced down on the shallow ford, which divides the ancient city of D—— from the parish of W——. This little rivu-

let had been swollen by the autumnal rains into a broad stream, and now presented a glittering sheet of ice to the eye. To this spot the spectre steed urged his frantic course. The ice shivered to splinters beneath his hoofs, and I was dashed with violence into the water. With the greatest difficulty I succeeded in extricating myself from the floating masses of ice, and once more found myself safe on *terra firma*. But the horse was gone ! Shivering with cold and terror, I cast my eyes round the heath—but no sight was visible, no sound met my ears, but the angry voice of the troubled ocean. I remember nothing more. My senses failed me ; and, when the morning dawned, my nightly fears were renewed by finding myself awakened on the identical heap of old nets in the corner of Rachel Lagon's shed. On returning to the Jolly Fisherman, I found the girls, and my uncle, wondering what had become of me. I related the adventures of the night, and how I had accompanied them to the toll-gate, and returned on that horse of the devil's own training over the moor. But verily I believe old Rachel had possessed them ! They swore that they left me with the witch ; and, being fearful of prosecuting their journey alone, they returned to the Jolly Fisherman without me."

" Could you not account, Joel," said I, " for the adventures of the night, without the help of magic ? "

" What other power," replied the old man, rising and wiping his brow, " could effect it ? As I stand here a living man, these things really happened to me."

" In sleep," continued I ; " you left old Rachel's hut in a state of intoxication ; overpowered by liquor, you sank down in the shed, and imagination did the rest. Your adventures my good friend, were nothing more nor less than the night mare. Therefore cease, I beseech you, to attribute to a poor, insane, deluded old woman the powers of *witchcraft*."

## ON EGOTISM.

On n'auroit guere de plaisir, si l'on ne re flattoit point.

I AM almost ashamed to set it down in English that we find so much pleasure in flattering ourselves: but so it is. And then, for Egotism, I look upon it as one of the most pleasant things in the world—so time-killing, and so soothing: a batch of it is more than consolatory, and most ticklish relish to the palate.

It is beyond dispute that we are all, more or less, in love with Egotism. Pope will have it, that "all our knowledge is, ourselves to know:" and, at any rate, we prove most abundantly, how much of our pleasure is derived from thinking and talking of ourselves. Let us put the case to our consciences, and ask, what friend's society we like the best? The answer honestly is—that one's who will throw his feet across a chair, and chatter with us about our thoughts and feelings—of the loves that throw a spirit of soft romance around our youth—and of the determined and steady resolves that grow out of a more sober age. To be serious in a weighty matter, it becomes us to check, as much as possible, the baneful but pleasant propensity to employ so much of our leisure in idle and fruitless speculations—in that kind of egotistical abstraction, which Locke would call "dreaming awake."

'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,  
By blood or ink—

but sweeter still to hold the green sprigs in our fingers, and tell how they were won. The soldier who has braved but one campaign, will always have a tale of war and wonder to surprise us; in which, himself will be, of course the leading character. There is, however, one charm in *military egotism*—it is generally of a plain kind; unaccompanied with that sophisticated gloss, which frequently distinguishes the *lectures on self* of the man of letters. The latter is not at all a pleasant egotist in the

way of conversation—he is somewhat better in print.

Amongst literary men, ancient or modern, there is a plentiful sprinkling of the character in question. Rousseau, a considerable egotist, mixes himself up, very often delightfully, with scenes of great pathos and sentiment. I do not complain much of the egotism of Rousseau.

Then we have some desperate cases of the kind in the writers of our own time. Lord Byron is a splendid proof: indeed, he sings of himself so finely, that we seldom hesitate to follow him. It is not exactly so with Wordsworth, for he sometimes tires us with his trifling company. Still it is next to impossible not to be delighted, now and then, with the chaste spirit which accompanies the egotism of Wordsworth:

The moon, the glory of the sun,  
And streams that murmur as they run,  
Have been his dearest joy.

And there is not, perhaps, generally speaking, a more pleasant companion than he, with whom to "haunt the water-falls;" provided he be not allowed to walk too slowly, and thus be left at liberty to indulge in his egotistical trifles. Coleridge is a metaphysical egotist, and that's the very worst class of all. Walter Scott does not display too much of the feeling in question, if we may judge from his writings: indeed, he generally appears as a nice kind of amiable gentleman, who is ever on the best terms with himself; but who on that very account, perhaps, thinks it too much to expect that the world should feel an interest in every trifling circumstance connected with his life. Leigh Hunt is a sad fellow in this respect; for he cannot take a stroll to Hampstead (his Paradise,) without giving us an account of his journey. This gentleman's egotism is very peculiar, and perhaps it partakes a little too much of vanity to

be tolerated ; nevertheless, it is often extremely amusing, and always original. It is too much trouble for Anacreon Moore to be a considerable egotist.

In noticing as I have done, the egotism of the poets, I must be understood as doing so, because they are the beings with whom I would wish to hold converse ; for their's are such pleasant conceits, that surely it is one of the finest things in the world "to live in the light of their fancies."

We were told, a long time ago, that lovers are so fond of each other's company, only because they are everlastingly talking about themselves ; and really, when we come to think of it, there is a great deal of truth in the remark. The most tolerable sort of conversational egotism is that of the old soldier and the young lady. The one has so much honest enthusiasm to recommend it : and the other, so much of bright eyes and playful smiles—of glowing cheeks, and tell-tale blushes.

## VARIETIES.

### MORAL CONDITION OF LONDON, &c.

**T**HREE is great difficulty in obtaining an accurate return of the various places of worship in this vast city, yet the following statement will, I believe, approach very near the truth.

Episcopal Churches and Chapels . . . . .	200
Independent Chapels . . . . .	66
Wesleyan Methodist do. . . . .	36
Baptist do. . . . .	32
Calvinistic Methodist Do. . . . .	30
Presbyterian (Scotch and Unitarian) do. 16	
Roman Catholic do. . . . .	14
Quakers' Meetings . . . . .	6
<hr/>	
	400

If we calculate that the average attendance at each place is 500 persons, which is certainly the greatest extent we can allow, and add 250 more for the fluctuating hearers at the several services of each Sabbath, it will give a result of 300,000 persons. Now, the population of this wide spread metropolis is estimated by the last census, at 1,274,800 souls ; from which subtract the feeble minority above, and we find NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOUR THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED persons neglecting the public worship of God ! And though considerable deduction are to be made for young children, sick persons, and the aged and infirm, yet, after all, the multitude without even the forms of religion, around us, is most appalling. The following

statement will illustrate some of the occupation of the Sabbath :—"It appears, that of the papers at present published in London on the Sunday, there are circulated, on the lowest estimate, 45,000 copies, and that, upon the most moderate computation, between 2 and 300,000 readers of these papers are to be found in the metropolis alone, while the great number of pressmen, distributors, master-venders, hawkers, and subordinate agents, of both sexes and of all ages, who are necessarily employed on the Sabbath all tend to the most flagrant breach of the day of rest."

In such a state we cannot wonder at the report of Mr. Wontner, the excellent governor of Newgate, by which it appears, that during the year 1826 there were committed to that gaol,

Males under 21 years of age . . . . .	1227
Females ditto ditto . . . . .	442
Males above 21 . . . . .	1092
Females ditto . . . . .	106
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	2981

Being an increase of 547 commitments in the past year !

### SHERIDAN AND THE ACTOR.

At the first performance of "The Critic," Sheridan had adopted, as the representative of Lord Burleigh, an actor whose "looks profound" accorded with his "ignorance;" but

who, until then, had only aspired to the livery of the theatre—the placing of chairs, or the presentation of a letter; yet who, in this humble display of histrionic art, generally contrived to commit some egregious blunder. He was remonstrated with on his choice, by one of the performers, who demonstrated the excessive dulness of apprehension of *the would-be Minister of State*; and, like other and recent instances in that capacity, his singular aptitude to error, however simple the part he had to enact, or clear and concise the instructions with which it might be accompanied. As Sheridan had planned the character, the face was everything, and the lengthened, dull, and inexpressive visage of the subject was too *strictly ministerial* to be lost; and the author would, as he said, “defy him to go wrong.” Still his friend was sceptical: nor were his doubts removed by Sheridan’s assuring him that the representative of Lord Burleigh “would have only to look wise, shake his head, and hold his tongue;” and he so far persisted as to lay a bet with the author that some capital blunder would nevertheless occur.

The wager was accepted, and, in the fulness of his confidence, Sheridan insisted that the actor should not even rehearse the part, and yet that he should get through with it satisfactorily to the public and himself on the night of the first performance. It came. The arbiter of hopes and fears appeared in all the “bearded majesty” of the age of Elizabeth; and, flattered by the preference of the great author, had carefully con ned over the following instructions:—“Mr. ——, as Lord Burleigh, will advance, from the prompter’s side;—proceed to the front of the stage;—fall back to where Mr. G—— stands as Sir Christopher Hatton,—shake his head, and exit.” The important moment came. With “state- ly step and slow,” Lord Burleigh advanced in face of the audience. “Capital!” exclaimed the gratified author; with equal correctness he retreated to the side of Sir Christo-

pher, without *literally falling back*, which Sheridan had for a moment doubted might be the case. “Good! a lucky escape through,” half faltered the anxious poet. “Now! now!” he continued, with eager delight at having got so far so well: but, what was his horror, when his unlucky pupil, instead of shaking his own blundering head, in strict but unfortunate interpretation of his orders, took that of Sir Christopher within his hands, shook it long and manfully, and then walked off with a look of exultation at having so exactly complied with his lesson.

#### HAYMARKET THEATRE.

On Saturday Mr. Poole’s new piece was ill received; but he has both talent and fame enough to support him under the chagrin of this partial failure. The decisive condemnation of *Gudgeons and Sharks* was chiefly attributable to a wide-mouthed individual in the pit, whose yawns were perfectly terrific, and, unfortunately for the author, at length became infections. A cod’s-head could not display a more desperate gulf; and by this yawning abyss the poor Gudgeons were devoured.

The *Rencontre* makes good its pleasant way, and is capitally acted every evening. Vestris, who has not got plump in consequence of her frequent indispositions, is all *naïveté* in *Justine*; E. Tree plays *Mad. de Merville, a merville*; and Farren, in the old *Baron*, is perfectly rich. Cooper too, in the *Colonel*, with Lamport his man, and the useful Williams in *Moustache*, are all the most meritorious contributors to the gaiety and good humour of this pleasing drama.

#### LITERARY CHIT CHAT.

George Colman has completed the first volume of his *Retrospects*—they are to form three octavo volumes, and are to be ornamented with original portraits of himself and of his father.

The third volume, or continuation, of *Reynolds’s Life and Times*, will consist chiefly of anecdotes of the two Green Rooms, and a comic tale

called, *The Life and Death of a Publisher.*

T. Moore has given up his intention of writing a comedy for Covent Garden, and has most honourably returned to the managers the retaining fee they had advanced on the occasion. —

#### SHAKSPEARE'S SONNETS.

A pompous commentator lately thus addressed the modern alterer of the Midsummer Night's Dream, Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona, &c.—“How dare you, sir, operatise our divine bard?—particularly when you evidently do not know which are, and which are not his sonnets?—ay, sir—answer me—who wrote *Come live with me, and be my Love?*” “Why,” replied the Avonian harmoniser, “Marlow, to be sure.” “Indeed! and Marlow, I suppose, wrote that beautiful Shakspearean sonnet, *In sooth, sweet Philomel?*” “No, Mr. Blackletter,” rejoined the dramatic caterer; “I wrote that myself.” —

#### STEAM NAVIGATION.

It has lately been discovered that an experiment, by command of the Emperor Charles V., to navigate by steam, was made in the year 1543. A ship of two hundred tons, laden with corn, in the harbour of Barcelona, was chosen for the trial. The machine is described as having been composed of a vast cylinder, full of water, and two large wheels, fixed outwardly to the sides of the vessel. The cylinder, however, was thought liable to explode: the vessel sailed only at the rate of a mile and a half an hour; and the scheme was consequently abandoned; but the emperor paid all the cost of the experiment, and allowed the engineer a pension. —

#### SUSPENDED ANIMATION.

Bees may be immersed in water for a long time, without loss of life. Reaumur saw them recover after nine hours immersion. Dr. Evans accidentally left some eighteen hours in water; when laded out with a spoon and placed in the sunshine, the majo-

rity of them recovered. Other animals, of analogous species, exhibit still more wonderful resurrections. De Geer has observed one species of mite to live for some time in spirits of wine; and Mr. Kirby states, that being desirous of preserving a very pretty lady-bird, and not knowing how to accomplish it, he immersed it in geneva. “After leaving it,” says he, “in this situation a day and a night, and seeing it without motion, I concluded it was dead, and laid it in the sun to dry. It no sooner, however, felt the warmth than it began to move, and afterwards flew away.” This circumstance laid the foundation of Mr. K.’s study of entomology. —

#### MUMMIES.

In a discourse recently pronounced at Paris, by M. Julia Fontenelle, on the Egyptian practice of embalming, the professor maintained, that a physical necessity had rendered that practice indispensable. The inundations of the Nile annually covered for four months almost the whole of the cultivated parts of Egypt. It is evident, therefore, that it was necessary to place the towns and villages upon elevated spots. It appears, according to Danvers, that at the time of its greatest prosperity, under the reign of Sesostris, Egypt contained, upon a territory of 2,250 square leagues, about 6,222 persons on each; which, supposing that in the year one death takes place among forty persons, gives 350,000 deaths annually. These corpses must be disposed of, either by interment or by burning. Yet both these modes were almost impracticable. If buried, either around the inhabited places, or in those spots which were overflowed by the Nile, it is evident that, by the decomposition of the bodies, the purity of the air would be so affected, as to render it the germ of destruction to the people. As for the second mode of destroying corpses, the want of fuel presented an insurmountable obstacle to it. A more easy process was open to the Egyptians. That fine country was

sprinkled with small lakes of *natron* (sub-carbonate of soda), and as that salt possesses the property of preserving animal substances from putrefaction, it was naturally used as the means of embalming dead bodies.

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#### ARTIFICIAL STONE.

Mr. Joseph Aspden, of Leeds, has taken out a patent for a new mode of producing an artificial stone, or cement, for the covering of buildings. He calls it Portland cement, from its resemblance to Portland stone. Its component parts are as follow:—a given quantity of lime-stone, of the kind usually employed for mending roads, is to be pulverized by beating or grinding, or it may be taken from the road in a pulverized state, or in a state of puddle: this, when dried, is to be calcined in a furnace in the usual way. A similar quantity of argillaceous earth, or clay, is then to be mixed in water with the calcined lime-stone, and the whole perfectly incorporated, by manual labour or by machinery, into a plastic state. This mixture is then to be placed in shallow vessels for the purpose of evaporation, and then to be submitted to the action of the air, the sun, or the heat of fire, or steam conducted by pipes or flues under the pans of evaporating vessels. This composition, when in a dry state, is to be broken into lumps of suitable sizes, and is then to be calcined again, in a furnace similar to a lime-kiln, till the carbonic acid has been entirely expelled. The mixture so prepared is then to be pulverized by grinding or beating, and when reduced to a fine powder is in a fit state for use; and, with the addition of so much water as will be sufficient to bring it into the consistency of mortar, will, when applied to its purpose, make a compact and durable artificial stone, equal to the Portland stone itself.

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#### NEW SPECIES OF MAGNOLIA.

A new species of the Magnolia has been produced by the Chevalier Soulange Bodin, President of the Linnaean Society of Paris: it was ob-

tained by fecundating the pistils of the *Magnolia precia* with the pollen of the *M. purpurea*; the result has been a magnificent flower, like that of the *Magnolia alba*, with beautiful purple spotted and striated leaves. The new plant partakes of the nature of its parents; it flowers after the *M. alba*, and before the *M. purpurea*; it has the odour of the *M. alba*, which does not exist in the *M. purpurea*. There are only six petals in the *M. purpurea*, and nine in the *M. alba*, which latter is also the number in the new plant. This elegant production, to which the Linnaean Society of Paris has very properly given the name of *Magnolia Soulanguiana*, is only in its second year, and it is not yet known whether the variety will become constant in its form, and constitute a new species,—a fact which next year's produce will decide.

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#### LARGE KETTLE.

The convent of Bernardines, of Pisa, contains the largest kettle known in the world. It is of cast-iron, and measures fifty feet in height, and a hundred and forty feet in circumference; it daily prepares food for six thousand paupers.

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#### THE IKAN DUGONG.

We learn from competent authority on such subjects, that the skeleton of the creature now showing as a mermaid, is a genuine one of the Ikan Dugong—the animal that has from time immemorial been known by the name of “Femme du Mer,” or Mermaid of the Indian Seas,—a name as applicable, perhaps, in this instance, or more so, than that of Sea-Horse, Sea-Cow, &c. to other animals; as the Dugong really gives suck from pectoral breasts, and consequently must keep its own head, as well as that of its young one, above water while performing that maternal office. I had, (says our obliging correspondent,) through the means of a medical friend, an opportunity afforded me of seeing the skeleton in question, before an exhibition of it was, I believe, contemplat-

ed ; and I can assure you that it is genuine in every particular ; the tail is perfectly natural, and in its proper position : of which you may satisfy yourself, if you feel inclined, by examining specimens both of the entire animal and the skeleton, in the Museum of the College of Surgeons, which were some years since sent from India by the late Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles.

#### PRINCESS DE TALLEYRAND.

It was stated, it is said, in the drawing-room of the Princess de Talleyrand, that M. Cuvier had refused the office of censor of the press. "What impertinence!" said the Princess. "Why, Cato was a censor, and is he a better or a greater man than Cato? Cato censured the Roman newspapers ; and does he think it beneath him to censure the French ones?"

#### DR. HIBBERT'S SYSTEM OF GEOLOGY.

Dr. Hibbert is in considerable forwardness with the system of Geology which he has many years been preparing for publication. It is intended to contain a succinct view of the history of the earth, with a geological arrangement of the various mineral substances which each description of rock contains, and a particular account of the organic remains which have been discovered in the various strata. A considerable portion of the work is dedicated to an inquiry into the changes which are still going on to alter the surface of the globe. Dr. Hibbert, preparatory to the completion of his work, is visiting the Continent, with the view of satisfying himself on some important questions connected with the subject of rocks of igneous formation. For this purpose, he is undertaking a personal examination of several of the most noted volcanic districts in Europe.

#### CRIMES IN FRANCE.

It is an extraordinary and melancholy fact, and one which well deserves the serious attention of the legislator and the philosopher, that in France, as in England, the num-

ber of criminals last year exceeded the number in the year preceding. It appears, that in the year 1826 the number of persons charged with criminal offences in France was 7591 ; of whom 603, who fled, were condemned *par contumace*. Of the remainder, 2640 were acquitted ; and 4348 found guilty, and condemned to the following punishments :

To death . . . . .	150
To hard labour for life . . . . .	291
To hard labour for various terms . . . . .	1159
To solitary imprisonment . . . . .	1228
To the pillory ( <i>cærcan</i> ) . . . . .	5
To banishment . . . . .	1
To civil degradation . . . . .	1
To imprisonment, with or without fine . . . . .	1487
To confinement for a certain number of years (being under 16 years of age) in a house of correction . . . . .	56
	4348

The proportion of females to males was about twenty in a hundred ; and above half the accused persons were under 30 years of age. In England, in the year 1825, the number of persons found guilty of criminal offences was 9,964. In 1826 it amounted to 11,095 ; of whom 1,200 were condemned to death.—What can be the cause of this growth of crime in both countries ?

#### JAMES I.

Among the addresses presented upon the accession of James I. was one from the ancient town of Shrewsbury, wishing his majesty might reign as long as the *sun, moon, and stars endured*. "Faith, mon," said the king to the person who presented it, "if I do, my son then must reign by candle-light."

#### LIST OF NEW BOOKS.

Townley on the law of Moses, 8vo.—Sherwood's Chronology, Vol. II. 12mo.—Butterly Collector's Vade Mecum, 2d edition, 12mo.—Andrews's (Capt.) Travels in South America, 2 vols. post 8vo.—Van Halen's Imprisonment, 2 vols. 8vo.—Butler's Genuine Poetical Remarks, 8vo.—Lempiere's Lectures, 8vo.—Williams's Abstracts, 7 and 8, G. IV. 8vo.—West's Second Journal, 8vo.—Bulwer's Views in the Madeiras, folio.

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